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THE GOP SCORES**
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Environmentalism
against itself

BY ADAM J. WHITE





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Is This the End of America?

Why a single event in the next 12 months could radically change everything about our normal way of life... how we shop, travel, educate our kids, invest, save, and even retire.

Dear Reader,

My name is Porter Stansberry.

A little more than a decade ago, I founded a financial firm called Stansberry & Associates Investment Research.

Today we serve hundreds of thousands of customers, in more than 120 countries.

One thing that distinguishes our business is that we are completely independent from Wall Street and the companies we cover.

That is why, over the past few years, we were able to warn our readers about the inevitable collapse of companies such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, General Motors, among others.

To my knowledge, no other research firm in the world can match our record of correctly predicting the catastrophe that occurred in 2008.

But that is NOT the reason I wrote this letter...

I reference our success and experience with Wall Street's latest crisis because we believe there is an even bigger crisis lurking— something that will shake the very foundation of America.

And the incredible thing is... this has *absolutely nothing to do with the stock market.*

America's Most Important Day in 50 Years

In short, I want to detail for you a specific event that will likely take place in America's very near future... which could actually bring our country and our way of life to a grinding halt.

This looming crisis is related to the financial crisis of 2008... but it is infinitely more dangerous.

And as this problem comes to a head, I expect there to be riots in the streets... arrests on an unprecedented scale... and military-enforced martial law.

Believe me, I don't make this prediction lightly and I have no interest in trying to scare you. I'm simply following my research to its logical conclusion.

I did the same when I tracked Fannie and Freddie's accounting. The same with General Motors. And Bear Stearns and the rest.

When I began giving this warning in 2006 no one took me very seriously. Back then, most mainstream commentators just ignored me.

And when I presented my case and exposed the facts at economic conferences, they got angry. They couldn't refute my research... but they weren't ready to accept the enormity of its conclusions either.

That's why, before I go any further, I have to warn you...

What I have to say is controversial, and will offend many people... Democrats, Republicans, and

Tea Partiers, alike. In fact, I've already received dozens of pieces of hate mail.

Also... the ideas and solutions I'm going to present might seem somewhat radical to you at first... perhaps even "un-American."

My guess is that you'll say: "There's no way this could really happen... not here."

But just remember: No one believed me three years ago when I said the world's largest mortgage bankers (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) would soon go bankrupt.

And no one believed me when I said GM would go bankrupt as well... or that the same would happen to General Growth Properties (the biggest owner of mall property in America).

But again, that's exactly what happened.

And that brings us to today...

The same financial problems I've been tracking from bank to bank, from company to company for the last five years, have now found their way into the U.S. Treasury. I want to explain to you how this came to be. What it means is critically important to you and every American...

Because I truly believe the next phase in this crisis will threaten our very way of life.

The savings of millions will be wiped out. This disaster will change your business and your work.

It will dramatically affect your financial accounts, investments, and retirement.

It will change everything about your normal way of life: Where you vacation... where you send your kids or grandkids to school... how and where you shop... the way you protect your family and home.

I'll explain how I've come to conclude that these events are about to happen. Then you can decide for yourself if I'm full of hot air. **As for me, I'm more certain about this looming crisis than I've been about anything else in my life.**

I know that debts don't just disappear. I know that bailouts have big consequences. And, unlike most of the pundits on TV, I know a lot about finance and accounting.

Of course, the most important part of this situation is not what is happening... but rather what you can do about it.

In other words: Will you be prepared when the proverbial \$@*% hits the fan?

Don't worry, I'm not organizing a rally or demonstration. And I've turned down every request to run for political office.

Instead, I want to show you exactly what strategies I'm using personally, to protect and even grow my own money, and how you can prepare as well.

You see, I can tell you with near 100% certainty that most Americans will not know what to do when

WARNING:
This material is
CONTROVERSIAL,
and may be offensive to
some audiences.
Reader discretion is advised.

commodity prices — things like milk, bread and gasoline — soar.

They won't know what to do when banks close... and their credit cards stop working. Or when they're not allowed to buy gold or foreign currencies. Or when food stamps fail...

In short, our way of life in America is very likely about to change — I promise you. And I'd like to show you not only how and why this is all set to happen, but also what you can do to help protect yourself and your family.

That is why, over the past six months, I have spent a lot of time creating a special slide presentation, complete with charts, tables, and photographs.

I'd like to walk you through exactly what is happening, and what I think you should be doing to prepare for this crisis. I can't promise you'll emerge from this mess completely unharmed — but I can assure you that you'll be a lot better off than people who don't follow these simple steps.

As you watch this presentation (which is available completely free of charge) you can challenge every single one of my facts. I think you'll find that I'm right about each allegation I make.

Again, I'll lay out all the facts. I'll tell you exactly what is going on now, what I think will happen next, and how you can prepare yourself. Then, you can make up your mind for yourself.

A WORD OF WARNING, HOWEVER:
This presentation contains material that may be offensive to some audiences. Viewer discretion is advised. You can view the full presentation, free of charge, at:

www.EndOfAmerica88.com

Will you act now to protect yourself and your family from the catastrophe that's brewing in Washington? I hope so.

Sincerely,



Porter Stansberry
Founder, Stansberry & Assoc.
Investment Research

P.S. I promise you this presentation will be worth your time. That's why more than **7 million people** have viewed it already. Remember, you can watch it free of charge at: **www.EndOfAmerica88.com**.



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Contents

February 28, 2011 • Volume 16, Number 23



- 2 The Scrapbook *The next politicized celebrity, high-speed rail to nowhere, & more*
- 5 Casual *Victorino Matus loves the '80s*
- 7 Editorials
- Suckers?* BY WILLIAM KRISTOL
- Aardvark Liberalism* BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI
- \$12 Trillion of Difference* BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Articles

- 11 A Historic Flood of Red Ink BY JEFFREY H. ANDERSON
Obama's mind-boggling budget
- 12 The End of Fannie and Freddie? BY ARNOLD KLING
Closing the troubled housing agencies is not the only mortgage market fix we need
- 15 Regulator in Chief BY FRED BARNES
The unchecked, unelected, unaccountable Elizabeth Warren
- 16 Another Intelligence Failure? BY ABE SHULSKY & GARY SCHMITT
What did the CIA know and when did it know it?
- 17 Lugar's New Foes BY KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON
From Nixon's favorite mayor to Obama's favorite Republican

Features

- 22 Green Power, Red Lights BY ADAM J. WHITE
Environmental activists have yet to meet an energy project they won't try to stop
- 26 Death and Politics BY NOEMIE EMERY
On the use and abuse of grief as a partisan weapon

Books & Arts

- 30 Editor from Camelot BY JUDY BACHRACH
Jackie O among the literati
- 32 Exile at Large BY SUSANNE KLINGENSTEIN
The outsider's insights on the American soul
- 34 Under Siege BY LEE HARRIS
How Israelis contend with an existential threat
- 36 A Very Cold War BY HARVEY KLEHR & JOHN EARL HAYNES
The dying gasps of the Rosenberg apologists
- 39 Unit Cohesion BY JOHN PODHORETZ
How one Roman legion held together against the common enemy
- 40 Parody *Mubarak in Vegas*



COVER BY GARY LOCKE

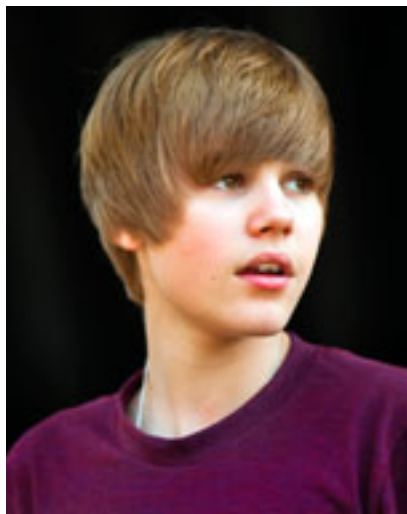
The Next Politicized Celebrity

THE SCRAPBOOK has a weakness for politicized celebrities, especially since there are so many of them. These days it's difficult to turn around without bumping into a Rock the Vote event (Madonna), or rally for gay marriage (Kathy Griffin), or snarky video about Sarah Palin (Matt Damon). Switch on *The View* and there's Whoopi Goldberg commiserating with Julia Roberts/Alec Baldwin/Janeane Garofalo about evil Republicans.

THE SCRAPBOOK has mixed feelings about all this: Some of the celebrity perspective is so idiotic—Rosie O'Donnell/Charlie Sheen's belief that the Bush administration engineered 9/11, Woody Harrelson's crusade for hemp—as to be entertaining; but we concede that a certain amount of it is creepy (David Letterman on Willow Palin), appalling (Margaret Cho on Laura Bush), and even dangerous (Jenny McCarthy's anti-vaccine crusade). And our delight at the spectacle of Lady Gaga trying to talk about federalism, or the Dixie Chicks explicating the First Amendment, is balanced with fond memories of the days when movie stars and pop singers tended to keep their political opinions to themselves. Every four years some might show their colors at the national conventions—Lloyd Bridges is a Democrat! Irene Dunne is a Republican!—but with a few well-known exceptions (Ronald Reagan, George Murphy), they tended to keep America guessing about whether they liked Ike or went all the way with LBJ.

The latest issue of *Rolling Stone*,

however, strongly suggests that the process is now straying into *reductio ad absurdum* territory. There on the cover is the 16-year-old Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber, and inside writer Vanessa Grigoriadis conducts a wide-ranging interview with the 16-year-old Bieber. We keep mentioning his age, by the way, because it



Justin Bieber

seems a reasonable assumption to THE SCRAPBOOK that most 16-year-olds, even in Canada, don't possess much knowledge about the recent past, or the wider world, and haven't thought very much about politics or foreign affairs. This is certainly true of young Bieber, whose insights are fully as banal as you would expect, and whose convictions appear to be all over the map.

Fans of traditional social conduct will be gratified to know that he doesn't "think you should have sex

with someone unless you love them," but patriots will be disappointed to learn that he would never become an American citizen because "Canada's the best country in the world." Of course, devotion to one's homeland is laudable—although not necessarily for the reasons cited by young Bieber: "We go to the doctor and we don't need to worry about paying him, but here, your whole life, you're broke because of medical bills." Pro-lifers will be intrigued to learn that he is opposed to abortion—"It's like killing a baby?" he tells *Rolling Stone*, complete with interrogative tone—but when asked about abortion in the case of rape, Bieber is more or less incapable of grappling with the concept ("I guess I haven't been in that position, so I wouldn't be able to judge that").

THE SCRAPBOOK's favorite passage, however, occurs when Vanessa Grigoriadis asks Justin Bieber a hypothetical question: If he were old enough to vote (and if he were a U.S. citizen), which political party would he support? In times of yore, the smart celebrity would deflect such a loaded inquiry—I vote for the candidate, not the party, etc.—in order not to alienate fans. Such restraint barely exists these days, but our suspicion is that Justin Bieber's agnostic answer is based not so much on discretion as on the average 16-year-old's knowledge of the world outside recording studios, concert arenas, and the editorial offices of *Rolling Stone*: "I'm not sure about the parties," he admits, "but whatever they have in Korea, that's bad."

Which Korea, he didn't specify. ♦

High-Speed Rail to Nowhere

PRESIDENT Obama's high-speed trains hit another bump last week. Florida's governor has now agreed with Wisconsin's and Ohio's that the president's dream would be a nightmare for taxpayers in his state.

As Stephen F. Hayes reported in these pages two months ago ("Railing Against Big Government," December 20), Wisconsin governor Scott Walker and Ohio governor John Kasich both said "thanks but no thanks" to the offer of federal stimulus funds to be used as a down payment on the build-out of high-speed rail service.

Both of the incoming governors had in fact come out against the project in their successful election campaigns last fall.

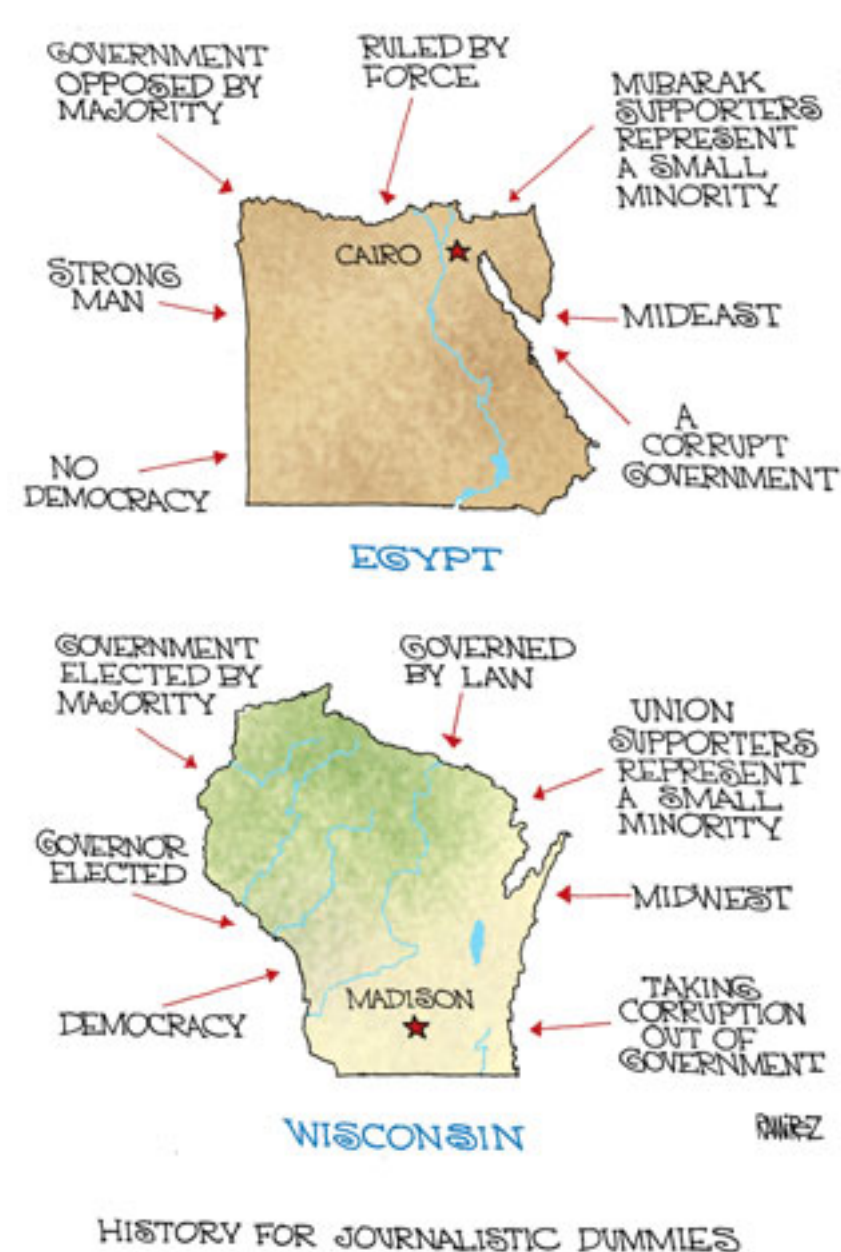
As Hayes noted, Walker in particular was highly vocal on the campaign trail about the obligation Wisconsin taxpayers would incur to cover shortfalls and operating costs for the

\$810 million line that would have connected Madison and Milwaukee. It was a foolish undertaking, he thought, for a state with a \$3 billion deficit and on a route for which there was little demand for better rail service.

Kasich, for his part, turned down \$400 million in stimulus money to connect Ohio's three biggest cities—Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati—with high-speed rail. “There was little public enthusiasm for the project,” Hayes noted, “which wouldn’t even have allowed an Ohio State fan to travel from Cleveland to Columbus and back on game day. And, as in Wisconsin, Ohio would have been on the hook for operating expenses and cost overruns.” A happy outcome for taxpayers? Not so fast. The depressing postscript was that while both governors wanted to see the stimulus funds returned to the Treasury, thereby lowering the federal deficit, the Obama administration simply redirected the funds to states like California, which are friendlier to the administration, taxpayers be damned.

Last week, Florida governor Rick Scott also rejected federal funds for high-speed rail connecting Orlando and Tampa, a decision that could send up to \$2.4 billion in stimulus money back to the federal government. Scott said that the red ink in President Obama’s budget—and the higher taxes the White House is proposing—would hurt the business environment in Florida. As Hayes noted on this magazine’s website, the decision came after Scott’s administration conducted a feasibility study to determine whether such a rail would be cost effective. It came back with the unsurprising conclusion: No, it wouldn’t be.

An independent study conducted for the Reason Foundation by Wendell Cox found that Florida taxpayers would almost certainly be on the hook for additional funding for the project—potentially a lot of money. Bob Poole, a transportation expert with the Reason Foundation, served as a campaign adviser to Scott. He told *THE WEEKLY STANDARD* that funding shortfalls were almost inevitable. “Historically, 90 percent of



high-speed rail projects have had cost overruns.”

In a statement announcing his decision, Scott listed three specific reasons for rejecting the money:

- First—capital cost overruns from the project could put Florida taxpayers on the hook for an additional \$3 billion.
- Second—ridership and revenue projections are historically overly-optimistic and would likely result in ongoing subsidies that state taxpayers would have to incur (from \$300

million-\$575 million over 10 years)....

- Finally—if the project becomes too costly for taxpayers and is shut down, the state would have to return the \$2.4 billion in federal funds to D.C.

Despite this well-deserved rebuke from three governors and counting, the Obama administration’s new budget proposes an additional \$53 billion for high-speed rail, one of the administration’s keys to “winning the future.” In his State of the Union, Obama pledged to make high-speed rail available to 80 percent of Americans in the

next 25 years. As he did when Wisconsin and Ohio said no to the high-speed rail boondoggle, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, predictably, has promised to redistribute the money not spent by Florida to more politically compliant states.

The administration should, instead, heed Scott's admonition: "Let us never forget, whether it is Washington or Tallahassee, government has no resources of its own. Government can only give to us what it has previously taken from us." ♦

Those Who Can't . . .

A high school teacher in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was suspended this month when it was discovered she was blogging disparagingly about her students. Natalie Munroe referred to her students, though not by name, as "out of control" and "rude, lazy, disengaged whiners." She didn't name the school she worked at, but the website had her picture on it under the name "Natalie M." ABC News reported:

When asked if it ever crossed her mind that someone from her school would see her blog, Munroe replied, "No, not really, not ever, in fact, it was up there for over a year, nobody found it. . . . I was writing it not about anyone specific, they were caricatures of students that I've had over the years. . . . It was meant tongue and cheek for myself and my friends,

it was not for mass consumption."

Frankly, if it were just a matter of the "insensitive" comments, THE SCRAPBOOK would probably promote her rather than suspend her—for her clear-eyed assessment of the character defects of a typical high school student. What disturbs us is this: How could a 30-year-old education-school graduate not know that a blog with her name and photo on it on something called the "World Wide Web" would eventually be discovered? On second thought, we think we know the answer. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

‘T here are three things you need to know about the current budget debate. First, it's essentially fraudulent. Second, most people posing as deficit hawks are faking it. Third . . .’ (Paul Krugman, *New York Times*, February 18, 2011). ♦

Articles We Found Easy to Put Down

‘P resident Barack Obama's proposed budget this week raised a key question about how he governs: Can he lead without getting out in front?’ (“Is Obama failing to lead, or leading in a new, crafty way?” Steven Thomma, *McClatchy Newspapers*, February 17, 2011). ♦

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1986 and All That

I've been told 2010 was a great year for movies—everything from *The King's Speech* to *The Social Network* to *Inception*. Not that I would know. As a parent of two toddlers, I get to a movie theater at most once or twice a year.

The reasons are obvious: In order to escape our parental duties for a few hours, my wife and I need to hire a sitter. This costs money, as do tickets plus soda and maybe a small bag of popcorn—let's round it up to \$100. If we're going out, we'd rather do it with friends over dinner and drinks.

In theory, we could watch movies at home, but our younger child sleeps in the adjoining den, and the flicker of the screen and the noise inevitably wake her up. As a result, we have retreated to the basement, which has an old television set with no high-definition and no functioning DVD player.

Fortunately, we enjoy watching the classics—by which I mean anything from the 1980s. And because I always hit the info button on the remote to find out when a movie was released, I am in a position to conclude that 1986 was the greatest year in film. Ever.

No, I'm not talking about critics' favorites such as *Platoon*, *Crimes of the Heart*, or *Children of a Lesser God*. I am, however, talking about movies like *Top Gun*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Aliens*, *Back to School*, *Hoosiers*, "*Crocodile*" *Dundee*, and *Stand by Me*.

So maybe I ought to qualify my earlier statement by saying 1986 was the greatest year in film if you were 13.

All told, I must have seen close to 30 movies that year—usually with my two best friends at the nearby mall, followed by Burger King and the arcade. I can remember how upbeat everything seemed: The economy was humming along, Reagan was cruising through his second term (although the Iran-contra scandal would break

at the end of that year), and even the Soviet Union seemed a little less threatening under Gorbachev. Sure, I might be glossing over unpleasant details—I was probably wearing short shorts, an Ocean Pacific T-shirt, and



knee-high tube socks—but it was nevertheless a time of optimism.

On the radio were songs like Wang Chung's "Everybody Have Fun Tonight" and "Walk of Life" by Dire Straits. On television, NBC's family-friendly lineup dominated Thursday nights: *The Cosby Show*, followed by *Family Ties*, *Cheers*, and *Night Court*. And in theaters there was "*Crocodile*" *Dundee*, about an Australian from the Outback who is suddenly transplanted to Manhattan—antics ensue! In *Back to School*, Rodney Dangerfield enrolls at his son's university—antics

ensue! And in *Short Circuit*, a robot comes to life after being struck by lightning and, well, you know the rest.

There were genuinely earnest feel-good movies like *Hoosiers*, based on a true story about a high school basketball team from a small town in Indiana that goes on to win the 1954 state championship, and *Stand By Me*, a poignant coming-of-age story, also set in the 1950s, in which four boys set out to find a dead body. Of course the highest-grossing film that year was *Top Gun*, which made you want to pilot an F-14 Tomcat, stare down Soviet MiGs, and get the girl (I'll omit playing beach volleyball—a scene involving shirtless men slathered in suntan oil).

But my favorite movie from 1986 was and is *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. I was in New York City with my sister who dragged me to see it at an RKO theater on the Upper East Side. It was one of those films I knew absolutely nothing about until it started. In short, a high school senior from the Chicago suburbs, along with his girlfriend and best friend, decides to cut class, no matter the cost. They go to the Mercantile Exchange, a Cubs game, Sears Tower, the Art Institute, and even a German parade where Ferris sings from atop a float.

Much like everything else around that time, the film left you feeling bright and cheery. Even George Will loved it, devoting an entire column to what he called "The Greatest Movie," by which he meant "the moviest movie, the one most true to the general spirit of movies, the spirit of effortless escapism." (The essay, from June 26, 1986, is still worth a read. It also generously quotes a certain Joseph Epstein.)

If I had to choose to see 30 movies from today or from 25 years ago, I'd still choose the latter. Sure, we didn't have *The King's Speech*. But we did have *Ferris*. We also had *Space Camp*, in which a group of kids accidentally get launched into orbit—antics ensue!

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Suckers?

‘They are suckers,’ one senior Democratic congressional aide told *Politico*.

He was speaking of the House Republicans who last week committed to detailed proposals to reduce entitlement spending. President Obama had punted in his budget. Plenty of powerful Republicans were happy to punt right back. Who wants to go first in sketching out risky cuts and controversial changes? But the forces of reform and responsibility in the House GOP caucus, led by Budget chairman Paul Ryan, have prevailed.

And so, when the House GOP releases its 2012 budget in a month or two, it will be a serious one, despite the president’s failure to be serious. As House GOP leaders put it last week, “Our budget will lead where the president has failed, and it will include real entitlement reforms.”

The senior Democratic aide’s further judgment: “They have painted themselves into a corner.”

But of course it’s entitlements that have painted all of us into a corner. It’s a dark and depressing corner, in which politicians cower, citizens duck responsibility, and the nation declines. The Republicans, rising above the normal standards of partisan calculation, are trying to lead us out of that corner. The mainstream media will give them little credit. The Democrats will pummel them.

And the question is: Are they suckers?

The answer depends on whether the American people are suckers. If P.T. Barnum is right that “there’s a sucker born every minute,” then the Republicans may pay a price for their courage. And Barnum was certainly a successful businessman.

But who really wants to be the party of P.T. Barnum? Is that a sustainable model for the Democrats? Will young people be attracted to a party that rests on cynicism and exploits fear? There is something, after all, in a modern and forward-looking democracy, to being the party of hope and change.

Even P.T. Barnum couldn’t stick resolutely to cynicism throughout his life. He was repelled by the institu-

tion of chattel slavery, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 led him to leave the Democrats to join the new Republican party. Elected to the Connecticut legislature in 1865 as a Republican, Barnum participated in the debate over the ratification by his state of the Thirteenth Amendment to

the Constitution, abolishing slavery. Speaking to the state legislature, he proclaimed, “A human soul is not to be trifled with. It may inhabit the body of a Chinaman, a Turk, an Arab or a Hottentot—it is still an immortal spirit!”

Surprising words for the most celebrated and successful proprietor in American history of freak shows, circus acts, and oddball hoaxes. But that’s America—an amazing mixture of high purpose and humbug. The Republican party is betting this can be a moment for high purpose. The Republicans are betting the American people will rise to the occasion.

The Democrats will construct halls of horrors, terrifying displays of the carnage wrought by what is in fact a sensible effort to restore limited government and ensure national solvency.

The Democrats and the Obama administration are playing the American people for suckers. We trust they’ll fail.

—William Kristol



Aardvark Liberalism

The unemployment rate is 9 percent and hasn’t been below that level since April 2009. The deficit, meanwhile, is projected to rise to \$1.6 trillion this year. It hasn’t been below \$1 trillion since 2008. More than \$3 trillion has been added to the federal debt since President

Obama took office on January 20, 2009. Across the country, state governments are reducing spending, renegotiating benefits, and in some cases mistakenly raising taxes and fees, in order to cope with an unprecedented fiscal crunch. In Washington, D.C., the House of Representatives has begun voting on the largest cuts in domestic discretionary spending in history. The GOP leadership has declared that its budget resolution, due in April, will address the principal engine of spending growth, mandatory spending programs that have been on autopilot for decades. Throughout the land, a bipartisan coalition of state legislators, governors, Tea Party activists, U.S. congressmen and senators, and all species of deficit hawk are rallying behind a noble goal: preventing a future in which America cannot meet her fiscal obligations and resorts to growth-destroying tax rates and savings-destroying inflation just to pay the interest on the debt. And what do House Democrats say in response?

Well, they say, what about Arthur Read? Who speaks for Arthur the Aardvark?

Arthur, as readers of a certain age no doubt know, is the protagonist in a series of beloved children's books by author Marc Brown. Though Arthur and his rambunctious sister D.W. are aardvarks, they face the same challenges as anyone else under the age of 12. Since 1996, Arthur has also been the star of *Arthur*, an animated series on PBS. Part of the funding for *Arthur* comes from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. House Republicans want to cut \$430 million from public broadcasting—and that, Representative Ed Markey of Massachusetts said the other day at a news conference on Capitol Hill, would leave “Arthur and his pals in the lurch.” This drive to restrain the federal budget, Markey continued, is nothing less than an “ideological attack on public broadcasting.” A man in a full-body Arthur suit was standing next to him. “Arthur,” Markey said glumly, “your silence is eloquent.”

Now, for all we know, Arthur's silence may well have been a protest against big government policies that rob Big Bird to pay Elmo. Or perhaps Arthur, being a reasonable aardvark, understood that cuts to public broadcasting most likely won't result in the end of *Sesame Street* or *Arthur*. To the contrary: These million-dollar edutainment juggernauts are more than capable of thriving without government support. What's more important is that, at a time when most of the adult world is engaged in the great task of disciplining government before the bond markets do it for us, representatives of one of America's two major political parties seem less concerned with debt than with an

oversized, nocturnal insect-eater of the order *Tubulidentata*.

Indeed, the Democrats' unseriousness about the challenges facing America in the 21st century is revealing. Somewhere along the line, American liberalism became a

reactionary force: more interested in preserving its hard-won constellation of benefits and subsidies than in facing a potentially catastrophic problem head-on and boldly embracing the change necessary for growth and excellence. From health care to Wall Street to pensions, liberals support policies that consolidate dysfunctional systems already in place rather than rethinking—progressing from?—outdated assumptions of what government can and cannot provide the citizenry. Where liberals once proclaimed their willingness to sacrifice for a world where a prosperous America stood as the champion of freedom, it has been left to the Tea Party and conservatives to confront a debt problem that even Obama's Treasury secretary concedes is “unsustainable.”

More than budget-cutting will be required to ensure that the next 100 years be remembered as the second American century. It will take a willing-

ness to entertain and debate bold public policies, as conservatives are now doing, to cite just one example, with the state bankruptcy proposal put forward by law professor David Skeel in these pages last year. It will mean questioning the conventional wisdom that has governed fiscal and monetary policy for decades. It will demand a strong defense of American exceptionalism and the maintenance of America's global commitments. It will depend upon leaders who pugnaciously assert the hard truths in pursuit of genuine reform.

It won't be easy. But Americans, we trust, will prefer a lion conservatism to an aardvark liberalism.

—Matthew Continetti



\$12 Trillion of Difference

In 1968, George Wallace groused, “There's not a dime's worth of difference between the Republicans and Democrats.” No one would say that anymore. Today, the difference between the parties is worth \$12 trillion.

Now, Democrats are the party of profligacy, and Republicans the party of fiscal responsibility. If there were any doubts about this new reality, they should have been dispelled by the events of the momentous week from February 11 to February 18, 2011.

On Friday, February 11, Indiana governor Mitch Daniels addressed the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, D.C. In a long and meaty speech, Daniels implored conservatives to embrace “fundamental change” and begin work on the only thing that will allow the United States to reverse its steep plunge into insolvency: entitlement reform. “We know what the basic elements must be,” Daniels said:

an affectionate thank you to the major social welfare programs of the last century; their sunset when those currently or soon to be enrolled have passed from the scene. The creation of new Social Security and Medicare compacts with the young people who will pay for their elders and who deserve to have a backstop available to them in their own retirement.

These programs should reserve their funds for those who are most in need of them. They should be updated to catch up to Americans’ increasing longevity and good health. They should protect benefits against inflation but not overprotect them. Medicare 2.0 should restore to the next generation the dignity of making their own decisions, by delivering

its dollars directly to the individual, based on financial and medical need, entrusting and empowering citizens to choose their own insurance and, inevitably, pay for more of their routine care like the discerning, autonomous consumers we know them to be.

That Daniels chose to address entitlement reform in his speech is encouraging. That he offered specific proposals—means testing, adjusting the eligibility age, Medicare vouchers—is important. That he did so not only as the governor of Indiana but as a possible 2012 presidential candidate is remarkable.

For years, politicians have warned in apocalyptic terms about the growing national debt. But most of those willing to propose solutions have been former politicians operating from the safe confines of a commission or college campus.

But Daniels says our fiscal situation is so dire that avoiding the topic is no longer an option. And the current occupant of the White House, he notes, is not interested in making these tough choices.

President Obama confirmed as much when he presented his 2012 budget proposal on Monday, February 14. Not only did the budget include new funding for pet Obama priorities—\$53 billion for high-speed rail—it didn’t touch entitlements. Under the White House’s plan, the federal government would spend \$3.819 trillion in 2012—\$1.645 trillion more than it would take in. When Obama was elected, the

Business & Labor Agree: Let’s Rebuild America

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Politics can make for strange bedfellows. Case in point: Last week I joined AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to testify on infrastructure investment before the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee. Rich and I don’t agree on much, but we believe that modernizing infrastructure will create jobs and economic growth.

Our infrastructure is crumbling, and it’s past time we did something about it. Congress has an excellent opportunity this year when it reauthorizes SAFETEA-LU—the legislation that funds highway and transit projects. Lawmakers should follow these six principles:

First, Congress must ensure that federal transportation policy, programs, and resources are oriented around national needs. Over the years, these programs began to put political expediency ahead of investments benefiting the nation as a whole. We need to refocus on investing for performance that will

add to long-term economic growth.

Second, we must adopt strategies and technologies to reduce congestion, improve mobility in urban areas, and maximize the use of existing assets. The Texas Transportation Institute just updated its *Urban Mobility Report*, and the news isn’t good. Motorists spend \$808 a year in lost time and wasted fuel.

Third, the bill must help ensure rural connectivity. The majority of the United States’ natural and agricultural resources are located in rural areas. Congress should make investments in small communities and rural areas that will tie them to major economic and population centers.

Fourth, Congress should develop a comprehensive freight program to ensure adequate capacity, reduce congestion, and increase throughput at key highway, rail, waterway, and intermodal choke points. The growth in international trade is overwhelming freight capacity, and it’s only going to get worse.

Fifth, Congress and the administration must maximize the use of existing

infrastructure and streamline project delivery for new infrastructure. Siting and permitting processes for new infrastructure create significant delays, resulting in inefficiencies across the system, increased project costs, and trouble with financing.

Finally, the bill’s underlying concern must always be safety. It is a national disgrace that nearly 34,000 Americans die on our highways every year—or 100 people every day. It’s unacceptable, and we can do more to prevent these senseless deaths.

To rebuild America, we need more than good ideas. We need money. Every option—from federal funding to private investment—must be on the table. And the money must be spent wisely.

The Chamber is committed to rebuilding America and will work with anyone to advance this goal.



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public debt totaled \$6.3 trillion. By the end of his first term, it will have nearly doubled, to \$11.9 trillion.

The White House was roundly criticized for its unseriousness, prompting the president to hold a press conference to quiet his critics. It didn't work. Obama explained that addressing entitlements would require Republicans and Democrats to come together and set politics aside in favor of real solutions—precisely what his bipartisan deficit commission had done, only to have its recommendations ignored.

Monday evening, at a well-attended whip meeting for House Republicans, California representative Kevin McCarthy, the majority whip, announced to his colleagues that the leadership had decided to embrace entitlement reform. On Tuesday, the leadership released a statement promising to lead where President Obama had failed to do so. The GOP budget, they wrote, “will include real entitlement reforms so that we can have a conversation with the American people about the challenges we face and the need to chart a new path to prosperity.”

As a practical matter, this meant that Paul Ryan, the chairman of the House Budget Committee, would be allowed to include entitlements in his 2012 budget, due out later this spring. As a political matter, House Republicans had decided to touch the untouchable—a courageous decision that carries high risk.

They did not make the decision lightly. Ryan had been engaged in discussions with GOP leadership—and pollsters, political strategists, policy experts, and budget mavens—since November's election. Several pollsters advised against tackling entitlements before the 2012 presidential election, and House GOP leaders were nervous.

But conservatives in the House, particularly freshman Republicans, believe that they won the 2010 midterms because of their commitments to cut spending and balance the budget. When the GOP leadership suggested they would not be able to cut \$100 billion in nondefense discretionary spending from this year's budget, as they'd promised in the GOP “Pledge” before the election, the freshmen revolted, forcing the leadership to come up with enough cuts to hit their mark. These spending cuts are drastic and necessary, but they cannot alter the current trajectory of the debt. Only reforming entitlements can.

The decision to grasp the nettle changes everything—for this Congress and for the presidential election. Within eight weeks, House Republicans will have proposed specific entitlement reforms. A major fight in Congress is inevitable, and Republicans will be forced to defend their plan. Can a GOP presidential candidate run against them? Perhaps, but only if he or she has specific entitlement reforms to propose instead.

The media mostly missed the significance of the House

GOP announcement. But on Wednesday, February 16, reporters packed into a large room at the American Enterprise Institute to hear New Jersey governor Chris Christie declare: “It's time to do big things.”

Christie demanded that his party stop pretending that entitlement reform can wait. Instead, Republicans should do what voters elected them to do: lead. With his trademark bluntness, he said, “If we're not honest about these things—on the state level about pensions and benefits and on the federal level about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—we are on the path to ruin.”

Not all of the action was in Washington, however. On the night before his speech, Christie had texted words of encouragement to his good friend and fellow conservative reformer Scott Walker, the governor of Wisconsin. In advance of presenting his state's budget, Walker introduced

a “budget repair bill” that included changes to collective bargaining with public employee unions. Walker's proposal also included a requirement that state employees begin to contribute to their pensions—5.8 percent of their annual salary, near the national average for pension contributions. And the legislation would make state employees pay about 12 percent of their health care premiums, double the 6 percent they had been paying, but well below the national average of more than 20 percent.

This was too much, apparently. Teachers' unions across Wisconsin urged their colleagues to take an unpaid day off. Thousands of public employees took to the streets of Madison in protest

—a crowd organized in part by the Democratic National Committee and Obama for America, Barack Obama's 2008 campaign group. The president weighed in, too, calling it “an assault on unions.”

On Friday the 18th, Walker, who ran for governor on a promise to cut state government dramatically, politely told the president to mind his own business. “We're focusing on balancing our budget. It would be wise for the president and others in Washington to focus on balancing their budget, which they're a long ways from doing.”

There are exceptions to this new pattern of partisan contrast. New York's new Democratic governor, Andrew Cuomo, is pushing a plan for fiscal restraint that might have come out of Christie's office in Trenton. But the exceptions only dramatize the broader truth. Democrats are still spending the way President Obama said he would when he won in 2008. Republicans are working to cut government the way they said they would when they won in 2010. As for 2012, it's shaping up to be one of those years when the voters face a choice, not an echo.

—Stephen F. Hayes

Christie: ‘If we’re not honest about these things—on the state level about pensions and benefits and on the federal level about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—we are on the path to ruin.’

A Historic Flood of Red Ink

Obama's mind-boggling budget

BY JEFFREY H. ANDERSON

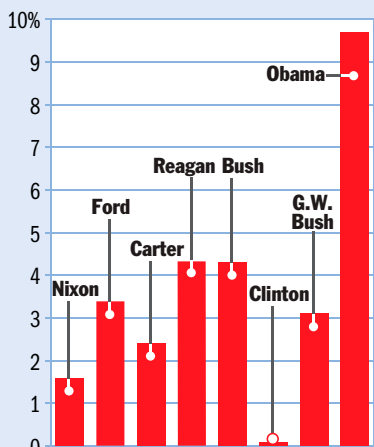


After proposing his third straight budget calling for more than \$1 trillion in deficit spending—no other president has ever proposed even half that much (although, in his last year, President George W. Bush did end up spending that much)—President Obama complained to reporters, “You guys are pretty impatient.” In truth, Obama has gotten way too much of a pass on his deficit spending, which is so far outside of America’s historical norms as to be mind-boggling.

In a fair accounting, President Obama is responsible (along with the then-Democratic Congress) for the \$1.3 trillion in deficit spending in 2010 and the estimated \$1.6 trillion in deficit spending in 2011. He is responsible for the projected \$1.1 trillion in deficit spending in his recent budget proposal. He is also responsible for the approximately \$200 billion that the

Jeffrey H. Anderson was the senior speechwriter for Secretary Mike Leavitt at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Presidents' Average Annual Deficit Spending as a Percentage of GDP



SOURCES: White House Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Budget Office, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that his economic “stimulus” added to the deficit in 2009.

He should not get credit, moreover, for the \$149 billion in TARP

(Troubled Asset Relief Program) repayments made in 2010 and 2011 to cover most of the \$154 billion in bank loans that remained unpaid at the end of the 2009 fiscal year—loans that count against President Bush’s 2009 deficit tally. The Treasury Department says that all but \$5 billion of the TARP bank loans has now been repaid. The portion of repayments that was for loans issued in 2009 should be deducted from Bush’s deficit tally, not credited to Obama as deficit savings.

Add it all up, and Obama is responsible for \$4.4 trillion in actual or projected deficit spending in just three years in office.

Let’s try to put that into historical perspective (the source for all of these figures is the White House Office of Management and Budget’s historical tables):

■ In actual dollars, President Obama’s \$4.4 trillion in deficit spending in just three years is 37 percent higher than the previous record of \$3.2 trillion (held by President George W. Bush) in deficit spending for an entire presidency.

OBAMA BY ZACH FRANZEN; CHART BY THE WEEKLY STANDARD

It's no small feat to demolish an 8-year record in just 3 years.

■ In inflation-adjusted dollars, President Obama's \$3.8 trillion (in constant fiscal-year 2005 dollars) in deficit spending in just three years is nearly double our \$2 trillion (in constant fiscal-year 2005 dollars) in deficit spending in the five fiscal years during which we were fighting World War II (FY 1942-46). It's no small feat to nearly double the United States' inflation-adjusted deficits during the largest conflict in human history, and to do so in less time than it took American GIs to fight that two-front war.

■ As a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP), President Obama's average annual deficit spending is 9.7 percent of GDP. That's higher than during any single year of the Great Depression, the Cold War, the Korean War, or Vietnam. In fact, the only deficits in more than 200 years of American history that have exceeded even 6 percent of GDP have all involved either the Civil War, World War I, World War II, or President Obama.

■ In average annual deficit spending as a percentage of GDP, the nearby chart shows how President Obama stacks up against other presidents who have served during the past four decades.

■ The Obama deficit legacy, moreover, will be felt well beyond his tenure in office, especially if that tenure extends beyond a single term. First, Obama's spending through 2012 essentially doesn't include Obamacare. The CBO projects that Obamacare will increase spending by more than \$2 trillion in the overhaul's real first decade (2014 to 2023). That's more than \$2 trillion that could otherwise be used to pay down the debt, rather than allowing the debt to rise continually and then piling a massive new entitlement program on top of it.

Second, President Obama's gargantuan deficit spending will hamstring future efforts to make ends meet. Under Obama's own projections, interest payments on the debt are on course to triple from 2010 (his first budgetary year) to 2018, climbing from

\$196 billion to \$685 billion annually. Under his projections for 2018, interest payments on the debt will exceed all defense spending, including wartime spending. Think about that: In the first budgetary year after the next presidential term, our creditors are projected to get more money than our military.

At the end of 2008, just before President Obama took office, the national debt was \$9.986 trillion and 69 percent of GDP. Under his projections, eight years later it will be \$20.825 trillion and 104 percent of GDP. That's right: Our debt will soon exceed our national economic output for an entire year. And that's even if you believe the president's rosy projections of 4 percent real GDP growth over the next four years, considerably higher than the 2.7 percent achieved

over the past quarter-century and the 3.2 percent over the past half-century.

To correct our course, we need to advance real entitlement reform and repeal the looming entitlement that could be the boulder that breaks the camel's back: Obamacare. House Republicans need to produce a serious budget that offers real entitlement reform, as they appear poised to do. Actually enacting entitlement reform, however, will require presidential leadership. The most effective champions of bold fiscal prudence on Capitol Hill and in the statehouses, respectively, have been Representative Paul Ryan and Governor Chris Christie. In the wake of President Obama's wildly unprecedented deficit spending, such leadership is now needed at the presidential level. ♦

The End of Fannie and Freddie?

Closing the troubled housing agencies is not the only mortgage market fix we need. **BY ARNOLD KLING**

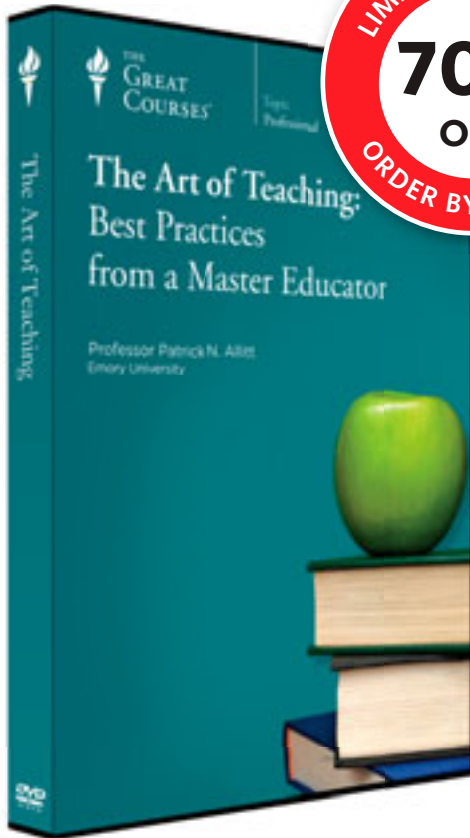
On February 11, the day that Hosni Mubarak resigned as president of Egypt, the Obama administration released its report to Congress on reforming America's housing finance market. The report most notably proposes phasing out Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two large government-sponsored enterprises (GSEs). Like Mubarak, the GSEs have seen their once formidable political position reduced to one of helpless isolation, abandoned by all former supporters. However, as in Egypt, deposing former leaders does not by itself ensure a happy outcome. American housing policy is afflicted with deep political pathologies, and

unless these can be confronted and overcome, a future without Fannie and Freddie could turn out to be worse than the status quo.

Over the past several decades, a diverse coalition of special interests has used "affordable housing" as a rallying cry to lobby for government support of mortgage lending on lenient, generous terms. As is well described by Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera in their book *All the Devils Are Here*, the participants in this favor-seeking effort have run the gamut from self-styled "community groups" all the way up to top-tier Wall Street firms.

As the "affordable housing" juggernaut gathered momentum, the mortgage market became laced with the booze of dubious lending practices. Loans to nonowner-occupied borrowers increased from less than

Arnold Kling is an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute and member of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.



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5 percent of the mortgage market to more than 15 percent. Down payments of less than 10 percent became the norm rather than the exception. Where home ownership used to promote thrift as households paid down mortgage principal and banked the increase in the value of their homes, some of the newer mortgages had “negative amortization,” and equity was dissipated with second mortgages and cash-out refinancing.

As they loaded up on this booze, mortgage market participants reveled in privatized gains and socialized risks. The GSEs epitomized this, of course, but everyone from overly aggressive home buyers to Wall Street investment banks took advantage of the good times while they lasted. The emergency government handouts afterward meant that all taxpayers got stuck with the hangover.

The big question going forward is whether Washington will be able to get off the sauce and stay off. If so, then any housing finance reform is very likely to succeed. If not, then failure is inevitable.

Currently, something like 90 percent of all new mortgages in this country are funded by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or by the GSEs. The administration’s report advocates a gradual reduction in the presence of government in the mortgage market, leaving room for the private sector to step in. This is an objective that should be welcome across the political spectrum. Surely even progressives must doubt the wisdom of government subsidies that accrue primarily to the upper half of the income distribution.

To achieve this gradual phaseout, the provision of government mortgage support will need to be rationed in some way. It can be rationed by price, with the agencies raising their fees until private firms are able to compete. It can be rationed by quantity, with limits imposed on the market share of the agencies. And it can be rationed by market segment, with the agencies prevented from purchasing certain types of mortgages.

The administration report includes

suggestions for all three types of rationing. It recommends increasing the fees charged by the GSEs and the FHA. It suggests a goal of reducing the FHA’s market share from the 30 percent it has reached in recent months to 10-15 percent going forward. It suggests taking the GSEs and FHA out of the high end of the housing market by reducing the size of the loans that they can purchase. And it suggests getting the government out of the extremely risky segments of the subprime and low-down-payment mortgage market, by tightening underwriting standards.

I wish that the report’s recommendations for rationing by market segment had been stronger. It would be best to have the GSEs go off the booze right away. By that I mean immediately prohibiting them from guaranteeing second mortgages, cash-out refinances, loans for nonowner-occupied homes, and loans with down payments of less than 10 percent. Furthermore, private mortgage insurance should be required on loans with down payments of less than 20 percent. Certainly the government should not provide backing for loans with negative amortization, and in fact I would go even further and limit guarantees to 15-year and 30-year fixed-rate loans. Adjustable-rate loans should by no means be banned from the market, but there is no reason for government to provide backing for them.

One of the recommendations of the report—to prevent Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae from holding mortgage securities in portfolio—has nothing to do with scaling back their role in mortgage lending. Instead, it bears the signature of lobbying by Wall Street, which wants to keep the lucrative business of mortgage securities trading all to itself. Say what you will about Freddie and Fannie, Wall Street’s designs on the mortgage market are even more rapacious, and its influence on policy potentially even more pernicious—especially if, as the report proposes, there is to be any sort of government “backstop” for the mortgage market.

This proposed backstop would simply be a new way of socializing risk, a Freddie Mac or Fannie Mae under a

different name. The description of this backstop in the report is shockingly brief and sketchy. It appears, however, to be based on a paper entitled “The Economics of Housing Finance Reform: Privatizing, Regulating and Backstopping Mortgage Markets,” by David Scharfstein and Adi Sunderam, a professor and graduate student, respectively, at Harvard’s business school and economics department.

Even as described more fully in their paper, the backstop mechanism is not well thought through. The authors suggest setting up a nonprofit institution backed by the government that would operate in the mortgage insurance business.

The advantage of the nonprofit structure is that it presumably would not be motivated to expand. There is no guarantee, however, that what starts out as a nonprofit enterprise will always remain so. Freddie Mac was formed in 1970 as a government agency, but when the opportunity presented itself in the late 1980s, Freddie became a shareholder-owned corporation. Its executives were hardly passive bystanders in the transition process.

Scharfstein and Sunderam envision this backstop agency expanding during a crisis. However, the same goal could be achieved by injecting capital into mortgage insurance companies in such an event. Meanwhile, an inexperienced entrant into the mortgage insurance industry would expose taxpayers to significant losses from mistakes or misjudgment.

In addition to these proposals, the administration’s report contains a number of laudable features. For instance, it raises the issue of reining in the Federal Home Loan Banks, often-forgotten enterprises that pose significant risks to taxpayers. Like your appendix or your tonsils, the FHLBs are not needed in the body politic, but they could potentially cause considerable pain and discomfort if they are not removed in timely fashion.

Like the revolution in Egypt, the administration’s report begins a new era of promise and peril. Congress should set about to achieve the promise and avoid the peril. ♦

Regulator in Chief

The unchecked, unelected, unaccountable Elizabeth Warren. **BY FRED BARNES**

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) is forgotten but not gone. It's housed, quietly and temporarily, in the Treasury Department as it prepares to become an official, stand-alone federal agency on July 21. The CFPB is hiring. It already has an acting director, an enforcement chief, and a growing staff. They're eager to come to the aid of borrowers and credit card holders.

Despite its angelic image, the CFPB won't be a nice little regulatory agency. It will be powerful, hard-nosed, and unaccountable. It will decide its own budget without the obligation of asking Congress for money. It will have no governing board, only a director whose rulings can't be vetoed. It will be almost impossible to challenge those rulings successfully in court.

The bureau, created by the Dodd-Frank legislation that revamped regulation of the financial industry last year, is a favorite of President Obama. And, like his health care law, it perfectly reflects his view of how government should work: It gives enormous authority to unelected bureaucrats in Washington. Administration officials were reported to have high-fived when it became clear the bureau would be part of Dodd-Frank.

Republican Spencer Bachus of Alabama, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee and a sharp critic, says the bureau won't be like an efficient private sector company (his examples are Costco, Amazon, and Southwest Airlines) but rather like

Amtrak, the government-run passenger rail line. "If you like TSA at the airport," he adds, "you'll love these guys."

The new agency was the brainchild of Elizabeth Warren, a Harvard law professor who proposed it in an influential article in 2007. She argued that consumers are protected when they buy "tangible consumer goods" like toasters, but when they purchase "credit products"—loans of various types—they're at the mercy of often-unscrupulous lenders.

Her model for the CFPB, Warren wrote, is the Consumer Product Safety Commission. But there are critical differences between the two. The commission is a traditional regulatory agency funded by Congress and thus accountable to Congress. The bureau is

authorized to receive up to 10 percent of the operating budget of the Federal Reserve (or as much as \$500 million), which raises its own funds. It will be loosely part of the Fed, but not subject to the Fed's authority.

Another important difference is what the bureau is empowered to target. For decades, "unfair or deceptive acts or practices" have been subject to federal jurisdiction. But for the CFPB, the word "abusive" was added. This means it can go after financial products that aren't deceptive and the terms of which are fully understood by borrowers. And the bureau will define what is abusive and what isn't.

When the CFPB began its planning stage last fall, the White House was expected to nominate Warren as director. But she is a controversial figure on Capitol Hill, loved by Democrats, but feared as a regulatory zealot

by Republicans. Rather than face a tough confirmation struggle, the president made her a presidential assistant, a kind of "director without portfolio," as one journalist put it.

For the bureau to be fully empowered in July, it must be headed by a Senate-confirmed director. This poses a problem for Obama. Warren is probably unconfirmable, given Republican opposition. That leaves the president with two choices: either give Warren a recess appointment through the end of 2012 or nominate someone else.

A recess appointment carries its own risks. "It would be dangerous to the American economy if Elizabeth Warren were put in that job by a recess appointment, thwarting the will of Congress," Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama told me. As ranking Republican on the Senate Banking Committee last year, he strongly opposed the CFPB. She would be "accountable to no one," Shelby says.

But Warren isn't the problem. Any director of the bureau would be unaccountable. The real problem is the breadth of power that Dodd-Frank gave the CFPB. Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee sought, unsuccessfully, to reduce its reach in negotiations with then-banking committee chairman Chris Dodd of Connecticut.

"Its powers are very, very vast," Corker says. "Who in the world would consider it appropriate to have one person appointed—one person!—to set the rules for the entire financial industry. It's a tremendous overreach. It's incredible to think about."

Republicans have offered several alternatives to the CFPB. Corker favored beefing up the power of existing regulators to crack down on lenders. Bachus wants to turn the bureau into a commission with a board and funding by Congress.

Neither is likely to pass this year. But House Republicans took a swipe at the CFPB by limiting what it can spend to \$80 million—Obama wanted \$134 million—as it gears up for its July launch. So while the media have largely ignored the new agency, at least a few Republicans haven't forgotten how much they dislike it.



Elizabeth Warren

Fred Barnes is executive editor of
THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

DAVID SHANKBOONE

Another Intelligence Failure?

What did the CIA know and when did it know it?

BY ABE SHULSKY AND GARY SCHMITT

President Obama's apparent frustration that he and his senior policymakers were taken by surprise with recent events in Tunisia and Egypt, reminds us of Yogi Berra's famous line, "It's like déjà vu all over again." Some momentous event occurs on the world scene—whether it's the Soviets putting nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba, the shah of Iran's ouster, Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, or the fall of the Berlin Wall—and the American president wants to know why his intelligence community did not give him a timely heads up. So too, now, with popular revolts toppling long-standing Arab dictatorships, Obama wants to know why the intelligence community was once again taken by surprise.

In one sense, no one should have been surprised by the fall of Tunisia's Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. History shows that autocracies, unlike liberal democracies, always look more stable than they are. While their security apparatuses may enable them to hang on for long periods of time, eventually domestic intelligence services can't make up for the lack of widespread support.

What the president and others are complaining about is that the vast and well-resourced American intelligence system apparently did not provide sufficient tactical warning about what was to occur in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere—leaving the

administration largely unprepared to deal with a cresting political tsunami in the Middle East that may turn out to be a strategic game changer on the order of the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, these criticisms almost always reflect a lack of clarity about what we should expect the CIA and the intelligence community to be able to do and, in turn, what we cannot expect them to do.

Consider, for example, Mubarak's refusal to step down on Thursday, February 10, and then his sudden decision to do so the very next day. In all likelihood, no source, electronic or human, would have allowed us to reliably predict what he would do. As best we can tell, Mubarak made his decision not to step down late in the day on Thursday and then reversed himself within hours. These were choices the people closest to him probably didn't even know he would make, since the Egyptian president himself didn't know where he would come down until the last moment.

In principle, it's possible to assess when the frustrations and grievances of a population have risen to the point that a popular uprising becomes a real possibility. But it is not possible to determine what spark will ignite it, or when that will occur. Who could have foreseen that a young fruit seller's self-immolation in a Tunisian town remote from the capital would touch off a process that would eventually bring down an Egyptian president? No more predictable was the solidarity and perseverance of the Tunisian and Egyptian protestors, who perhaps surprised even themselves with their resolve. It is somewhat ridiculous to expect that American analysts will have a better

sense of what people from a foreign society are capable of than the foreigners themselves.

So what should we expect of the U.S. intelligence community?

The fact is that while it would be nice to know the future, the point of policymaking is to influence events, insofar as that is possible. This requires knowing the various actors (inside and outside of any foreign government), what their objectives are, how they understand their specific situation, and what influence or power they might actually be able to wield. This is the type of information that helps senior policymakers determine what steps the government can take to move events in a direction favorable to the United States. No coach preparing for his next game wants a report from his scouts that tells him whether he is likely to win or lose; what he wants is a breakdown of the other team's key players, their strengths, and their weaknesses so he can devise a game plan that gives him the best chance of winning.

On this front, it is much harder to get a sense of how well the intelligence community supported the White House and other senior policymakers during the course of the Tunisian and Egyptian crises.

One statement by CIA director Leon Panetta about Tunisia suggests that the support might not have been as good as one would have hoped. At a congressional hearing February 10, Panetta said, "I think everybody assumed . . . that [Ben Ali] was going to basically crush any kind of demonstration. I don't think he even knew he was going to get the hell out of town until he decided to jump on a plane and leave."

And yet, by the time of Ben Ali's departure, it had become clear that the Tunisian Army was unwilling to "crush" the demonstrators. In fact, the army had its own interests, which were not aligned with Ben Ali's, nor with those of his wife's family, whose avariciousness had in fact eaten into the military's own business interests. Ben Ali's final decision to leave Tunisia may not have been predictable, but some of the pressures on him and

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the players involved in the final resolution of the crisis could have been known and assessed.

In the case of Egypt, if news reports of administration decision-making are accurate, then it appears the White House was constantly playing catch-up. To be sure, the fact that the administration was reacting to events rather than driving them reflected the administration's own initial policy ambivalence about what it actually wanted to see occur. But it also appears that the CIA, in particular, knew less about the internal dynamics of the regime than it might have. Up until a few weeks ago, the agency's priority had been to maintain friendly relations with Egyptian security and intelligence agencies in order to enhance information sharing concerning the mutual threats of Islamist terrorism and Iran, a priority that perhaps blinded it to other key issues. As one former senior Agency official explained in the wake of Mubarak's downfall, "We pulled back more and more, and relied on liaison to let us know what was going on."

No doubt, in the months ahead, the congressional intelligence committees will be reviewing how the CIA and others performed during the past few weeks. If those reviews are to be helpful, however, the committees will first have to have in mind the right standard. What's important isn't whether the intelligence community failed to predict the timing of the events that occurred in Tunisia and Egypt, but rather the quality of the support that it gave to policymakers as those crises unfolded.

The American public and our policymakers have long wanted to believe that if our intelligence were just good enough, we would be immune to political or strategic surprises or shocks. This is an unrealistic goal. In the wake of the 1964 coup against Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, one CIA analyst defended himself against criticism for missing the event by explaining that he had consulted with the world's leading Kremlinologist, one N. S. Khrushchev, who assured him that he had been surprised as well. ♦

Lugar's New Foes

From Nixon's favorite mayor to Obama's favorite Republican. BY KENNETH Y. TOMLINSON

Back when he was running for president, Barack Obama cited his relationship with Senator Richard Lugar so often that Lugar came to be known in the political press as "Obama's favorite Republican." Photos of Lugar even appeared in campaign ads that helped Obama (narrowly) carry Indiana.

After the election, the relationship continued to bear fruit for the White House. Lugar was one of the first Republican senators to endorse the president's choice of Sonia Sotomayor for the Supreme Court. Lugar was one of only five Senate Republicans to vote to confirm Elena Kagan.

And at the White House press conference called in December to celebrate Senate ratification of the START treaty, Obama explained, "I just got off the phone with Dick Lugar . . . and I told him how much I appreciated the work he had done."

In Washington, Lugar is viewed as an Indiana political icon. He is the only senator from the state ever to win election to a fourth term. Next year, as he celebrates his 80th birthday, he will have served six terms in the Senate.

In a recent *New York Times* profile, however, the paper warned that Lugar is "standing against his party on a number of significant issues at a politically dangerous time to do so." Wrote the *Times*:

In the heat of the post-election lame-duck session, he is defying his party on an earmark ban [and] a bill that would create a path to

citizenship for some illegal immigrants. . . . He even declined to sign a brief supporting state lawsuits against President Obama's health care law because he saw it as political posturing.

Back in Indiana, during those days before Christmas, state treasurer Richard Mourdock was calling GOP county chairmen asking them to commit to his candidacy if he challenges Lugar in next May's Indiana primary.



Richard Lugar: Will he be back for a seventh term?

Mourdock, a geologist by training, is a successful businessman who loves issue-oriented politics and enjoys challenges. A decade ago, at 49, he started running marathons, eventually realizing his goal to run Boston. The treasurer's office is not normally considered a path to the U.S. Senate, but last November Mourdock won reelection with 62 percent of the vote—the first treasurer in memory to lead the Republican ticket in Indiana. His performance easily bested that of Dan Coats, who won Indiana's other Senate seat with 55 percent.

As Mourdock began his calls to local Republican leaders, he figured that if 30 percent of county chairmen

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were willing to support him, he would be encouraged. He reached that total early the second day.

Soon he commissioned Wilson Research Strategies to poll likely Republican voters on the Senate race. Only 52 percent said they would vote for Lugar if the primary were held today—a dangerously low figure for a longtime incumbent. But when these likely voters were read a list of Lugar's recent political positions, his total fell to 29 percent. On the measure that pollsters call "hard reelect," only 31 percent said they would vote for Lugar "regardless of who ran against him."

Mourdock is slated to announce his candidacy for the Senate on February 22, and sources insist he will surprise observers with the extent of his support—including from Republican leaders in populous counties. Says one party pro, "No one has spoken to more Indiana Lincoln Day dinners than Richard Mourdock."

Lugar is giving every indication he will run for a seventh term—in

January he showed a serious spike in fundraising—even though leaders of some 70 Indiana Tea Party organizations signed a letter last month urging him to retire at the end of this term.

The primary is a long time away—scheduled for May 8, 2012—and a host of political factors could make this campaign one of the most fascinating in the country.

There is the possible presidential bid of popular Indiana governor Mitch Daniels, who was known early in his career as a Lugar protégé. Those close to Daniels insist the governor will remain neutral in the Senate primary, as he did in the Coats primary last year, but the presence of his name on the presidential primary ballot could greatly increase turnout, a plus for Lugar.

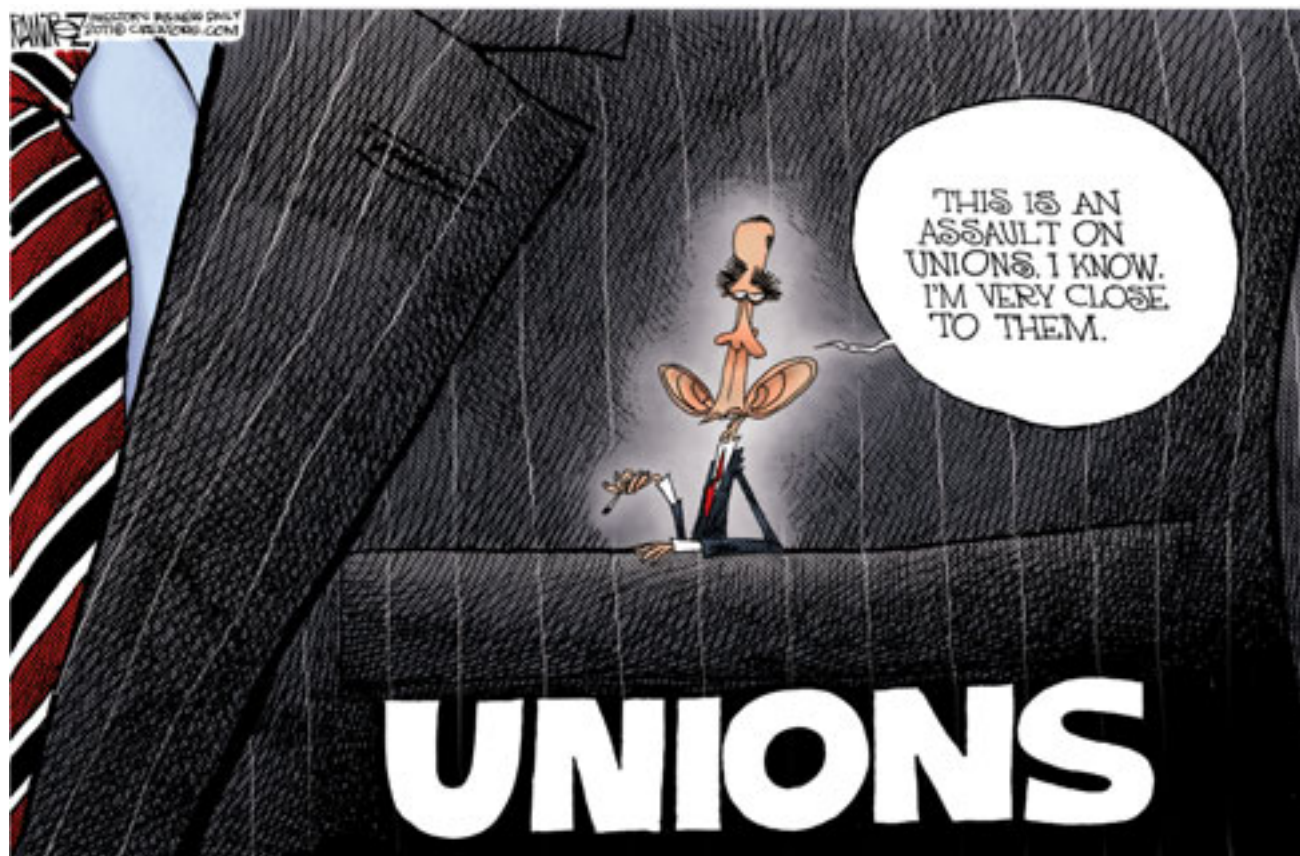
Primaries in Indiana are open to all voters, but Democrats will be having their own contentious primaries for senator and governor, and that will limit the willingness of moderates

and liberals to turn out for Republicans they've supported in the past.

Nor can Mourdock be certain he will be Lugar's only primary challenger. Forty-one-year-old state senator Mike Delph is a conservative favorite, a former aide to Representative Dan Burton, and the author of Arizona-style legislation to allow police in Indiana to check the immigration status of criminal suspects.

Delph was recently reelected by a large margin in a Marion County (Indianapolis) district that Obama carried easily. He has promised constituents that he will not get into the Senate race while the legislature is in session, which could be well into April. Meanwhile, Tea Party activists have organized a draft Delph movement.

If both men run, Delph and Mourdock will split the conservative vote and open an avenue for Lugar's survival. In Washington, there are those who insist the prideful Lugar in the end will call it quits rather than face GOP opposition back home. Even



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as Daniels was considering a race for president, Lugar released a poll he sponsored that showed he was the state's most respected political figure, much to the chagrin of the governor's presidential backers.

Confusing enough? There is even one political pro who believes that popular conservative congressman Mike Pence might be so convinced that Lugar is finished that he will not be able to resist an easy path to the Senate. Most think Pence will run for governor so he can gain executive experience for a future presidential race.

But for the moment it is Mourdock who is in the spotlight, and he is not without appeal. He is as comfortable making the scientific case against man-made global warming as he is noting it was international broadcasting that gave dissident Natan Sharansky the inspiring words of Ronald Reagan that helped him survive Soviet prisons.

"Richard was Tea Party before the Tea Party," declares GOP activist Jill Schroeder Vieth, who got her political start as a college student working in Mourdock's unsuccessful

1992 congressional campaign. He went on to serve two terms on the three-person Vanderburgh County (Evansville) board of commissioners—a rare success for a Republican in Indiana's third-largest jurisdiction.

Lugar is reported to have a war chest of \$2.5 million, and the former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman is a revered figure in prestigious foreign policy circles.

But one phone call to the National Rifle Association is enough to confirm the "F" Lugar receives for his NRA voting record, along with the statement: "In his more than 30 years in the Senate, Richard Lugar has been a consistent opponent of gun owners' rights on every key issue."

That's harsh music that will be played in coming months in rural Indiana.

Ultimately, however, it may be the words of Barack Obama that will give Lugar the most trouble back home. It puzzles political observers that Lugar allowed himself to be placed in this predicament—though it does echo the problems he had 40 years back as mayor of Indianapolis when networks dubbed him Richard Nixon's favorite mayor.

Over the years the *Almanac of American Politics* has paid tribute to Lugar, a one-time Rhodes scholar, for his "considerable intellect" and his "powerful voice" in foreign policy. But you also find in the *Almanac* a recurring theme: Lugar's career has been marred by political "disappointments."

The 1994 *Almanac* explained:

In 1984, he ran to succeed his friend Howard Baker as Senate majority leader, and finished third behind Bob Dole and Ted Stevens. In 1986, he was elbowed aside in Foreign Relations by [Jesse] Helms, and in August 1988, George Bush picked—instead of Lugar—a junior and less experienced colleague, Dan Quayle, to be his vice president.

Two years later the *Almanac* notes that Lugar ran for president, finishing seventh in the GOP primary in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire before quietly dropping out.

It could be that this history made Lugar vulnerable to Obama's self-serving adoration. Indeed, if Lugar does stay in the 2012 Republican Senate primary, the list of disappointments may get a little longer. ♦

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Green Power, Red Lights

*Environmental activists have yet to meet
an energy project they won't try to stop*

BY ADAM J. WHITE

‘Sputnik’ was not the only nostalgic moment in the State of the Union address. When President Obama called on Congress to “invest” in “clean energy breakthroughs” that would “translate into clean energy jobs,” he echoed every president since Nixon. In fact, President Obama himself made the same arguments two years ago, when he signed the stimulus bill.

“Because we know we can’t power America’s future on energy that’s controlled by foreign dictators,” the president said in 2009, “we are taking big steps down the road to energy independence, laying the groundwork for new green energy economies that can create countless well-paying jobs. It’s an investment that will double the amount of renewable energy produced over the next three years.”

Environmental activists applauded the stimulus’s \$20 billion investment and joined the president in asserting that renewable energy projects would bring both a cleaner economy and sorely needed jobs. The Sierra Club called the stimulus “a win-win for a strong economy and a healthier environment” and hailed the government’s commitment to “promoting the shift to wind and solar.”

All of which was long forgotten by December 2010, when the Sierra Club sued California regulators to block a solar energy project in the Mojave Desert—and asserted that stimulus money was the root of the project’s evil.

The Calico Solar Project would be built in the Mojave Desert, 100 miles east of Los Angeles. Twenty-five thousand mirrored dishes, each standing 40 feet high and 38 feet wide, would fill a 4,600-acre

plot of public land now controlled by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The project would generate 663.5 megawatts of electricity and connect to the grid by a two-mile transmission line. According to its proponents, the project could power more than 186,000 homes.

The project is subject to myriad federal and state laws, with multiple agencies sitting in judgment. At the state level, the California Energy Commission would license it and lead the environmental reviews required by California law. And at the federal level, Interior controls the rights-of-way needed to construct and operate the facility on public lands and would lead the mandatory federal environmental review.

Interior must also take into consideration numerous other federal laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, and Clean Water Act and consult with federal agencies such as the Department of Energy and Army Corps of Engineers; with state agencies such as the California Energy Commission; with Native American tribes; and with the public at large. Under certain circumstances, many of those agencies have effective vetoes over energy projects such as Calico Solar.

Calico Solar first applied for approval in 2008. Two years later, both California and Interior approved the project as safe, proper, and lawful. Interior found that the project would “provide climate, employment, and energy security benefits to California and the nation,” and that its environmental impacts were sufficiently minimized to justify its approval. And California determined that the project “will ensure protection of environmental quality and assure reasonably safe and reliable operation of the facility,” and that “direct, indirect, and cumulative adverse environmental impacts will be mitigated to the extent feasible”; where full mitigation of environmental effects “is not feasible, overriding considerations warrant acceptance of those impacts.”

Interior and California supported their decisions with strong evidence and thorough analysis. Interior’s decision

The Sierra Club hailed Obama’s commitment to ‘promoting the shift to wind and solar,’ all of which was long forgotten by the time it sued to block a solar energy project in the Mojave Desert.

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and environmental report comprise nearly 1,600 pages; California's, over 700 pages.

Calico Solar, vetted and approved by California and Interior, looked like a perfect example of the renewable energy projects that Congress, the president, and environmental groups all called for. But the Sierra Club, which two years earlier had praised the stimulus's support for solar and wind power, quickly petitioned the California Supreme Court to block the project . . . and *blamed* the stimulus money for creating incentives for regulators to rush their reviews: "In its rush to help the Project applicant qualify for attractive economic incentives pursuant to the federal . . . stimulus legislation, the Energy Commission unlawfully ignored longstanding [state environmental] requirements that required it to protect the environment and listed species."

Among those alleged errors was potential harm to wildlife—first and foremost, the endangered Desert Tortoise. According to the Sierra Club, California failed to "fully mitigate" the project's possible effects on tortoise habitat. That will be a difficult charge to prove, because California extensively reviewed the tortoise issue and required the project to adopt numerous tortoise-protection measures: perimeter fencing; the development of a desert tortoise "translocation" plan; strategic placement of parking areas, transmission lines, and roads; reporting requirements upon the discovery of injured or dead tortoises; and the project's acquisition and maintenance of 10,300 acres hospitable to tortoises in "compensatory habitat mitigation."

And amidst the Sierra Club's various complaints about the project's effect on desert tortoises, one noteworthy fact goes unmentioned. The commission's survey of the approved 4,600-acre project site detected only 10 tortoises.

Three years ago, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger spoke to a Yale audience on environmentalist opposition to clean energy projects. "They say that we want renewable energy, but we don't want you to put it anywhere. . . . I don't know whether this is ironic or absurd, but, I mean, if we cannot put solar power plants in the Mojave Desert, I don't know where the hell we can put it."

The Sierra Club's Calico Solar lawsuit certainly calls to

mind the governor's complaint. So does the separate federal lawsuit filed by Californians for Renewable Energy and other organizations to overturn Interior's approval of Calico and five other desert solar projects. And another case, in which a Native American tribe convinced a federal judge late last year to issue a preliminary injunction blocking Interior's approval of another solar energy project.

The term NIMBY—"Not In My Back Yard"—long ago came to summarize the local opposition to nearby infrastructure development. Fossil fuel projects are accustomed to local and environmentalist opposition. But ironically, renewable energy projects may give rise to even more local or environmentalist opposition. The bigger a project's geographic footprint, the more environmen-

tal resources it implicates, and solar and wind projects have the biggest footprints of all. In *Energy at the Crossroads*, scientist Vaclav Smil noted that the generation of electricity using solar involves a "power density" of 20 to 60 watts per square meter. Wind scored even worse, at 5 to 20 watts per square meter. "This is in great contrast to the extraction of fossil fuels and thermal generation of electricity," Smil writes. "These activities that define the modern high-

energy civilization produce commercial energies with power densities *orders of magnitude higher*, ranging mostly between" 1 to 10 kilowatts per square meter.

In other words, as Peter Huber and Mark Mills conclude in *The Bottomless Well*, "no conceivable mix of solar, biomass, or wind technology could meet even half our current energy demand without (at the very least) doubling the human footprint on the surface of the continent."

And the generation facilities—the solar and wind farms themselves—are only part of a project's total environmental impact. The sites best suited for renewable energy generation tend to be far from the industrial and population centers that they are built to serve. The Mojave Desert solar projects and far-offshore wind farms are not being created to power nearby desert- or island-dwellers. Nor are the wind farms envisioned for the Midwest and Great Plains intended only to power family farms. Instead, those projects will serve distant demand via long-distance transmission lines, crossing state borders, passing through numerous communities, and perhaps affecting endangered species and federally protected wetlands.

In short, renewable energy projects face immense



Proposed site of the Calico Solar project

regulatory challenges. Which raises a critical question: Why is the federal government spending billions of dollars on renewable energy when federal and state laws stand as obstacles to the subsidized projects' prospects?

If Congress and the president continue to subsidize utility-scale wind and solar projects—in an effort to decrease reliance on foreign energy sources, to diversify domestic energy supplies, to reduce emissions, or for other reasons—then regulatory reform appears to be necessary. Effective regulation is neither a rubber stamp nor a bureaucratic morass. Rather, it intelligently balances the relevant competing priorities:

Public participation. Communities are naturally distrustful of corporate projects that threaten to affect their local environments substantially. No regulatory process can retain its legitimacy without providing a meaningful opportunity for affected persons to be heard, and to be taken seriously.

Safety. Energy infrastructure places electricity, nuclear fuel, natural gas, and other hazards close to the workforce and the community. Federal regulators must therefore ensure that a project will be safely constructed, operated, and maintained.

Environmental protection. The myriad environmental protections codified in federal and state law promote a clean environment. The national interest in promoting renewable energy does not require their wholesale disregard, but it does require federal lawmakers to ensure that environmental statutes retain their flexibility, instead of becoming inappropriately rigid.

Expertise. Many federal and state agencies and other organizations have expertise to contribute to the regulatory process. The best regulatory framework draws that expertise to the table, where it can be put to its best use, while not allowing every contributing agency an effective veto over the project.

Judicial review. In the modern regulatory state, expert agencies are supervised lightly, but surely, by the courts. Judicial review, conducted under the deferential but firm standards of administrative law, allows the agencies to exercise their expert judgment in light of national priorities yet protects against clear errors of judgment or violations of binding law.

Efficiency. A national effort to promote renewable energy infrastructure—especially one intended to stimulate “green jobs” in the near future—must ensure that the regulatory reviews and subsequent judicial reviews are undertaken as promptly and efficiently as possible. Cape Wind, the embattled Cape Cod offshore wind farm, demonstrated astonishing fortitude in enduring a decade of litigation, environmental reviews, and legislative battles

before finally securing its regulatory approvals. That project's willingness and ability to forge ahead were exceptional, and Congress cannot assume that other projects will be able to endure similar tests of will.

Most important, in constructing a regulatory framework to achieve those ends, Congress need not write on a blank slate. Lessons have been learned from a century's experience in regulating oil and gas pipelines, liquefied natural gas import facilities, hydropower dams, nuclear facilities, and even the interstate transmission lines and the wind or solar farms that already have been proposed. Applying those lessons, an effective regulatory scheme for major renewable energy projects must include at least the following components:

One decision, one decider. Writing in support of the single presidency in *Federalist* 70, Alexander Hamilton urged that committing the executive power to a single office would not only secure the benefit of “energy in the Executive,” but also would focus responsibility and ensure accountability. Absent a single decisionmaker, “it often becomes impossible, amidst mutual accusations, to determine on whom the blame or the punishment of a pernicious measure, or series of pernicious measures, ought really to fall. It is shifted from one to another with so much dexterity, and under such plausible appearances, that the public opinion is left in suspense about the real author.”

Such is the case when responsibility for reviewing and approving or disapproving an energy infrastructure project is scattered across numerous federal agencies, or is bifurcated between the federal and state levels. Agencies that lack total jurisdiction over—and responsibility for—a given regulatory issue may avoid hard choices, interject opinions without taking responsibility for their effects, or lack the incentive to develop their own organizational competency for reviewing and processing project applications. Committing to one agency the sole authority over a project would better avoid those ills by focusing clear responsibility on that agency.

Accordingly, if Congress deems large-scale renewable energy projects to be a national priority, then it should commit to one federal agency—Interior, for example, or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)—the power and responsibility to make final decisions to approve or disapprove projects. Just as “the unity of the executive . . . was one of the best of the distinguishing features” of New York's constitution, according to *Federalist* 70, the unity of the executive will be the best distinguishing feature of renewable energy regulation.

Of course, the other relevant federal and state agencies must be brought into the process and contribute their expertise: the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior on water issues, the EPA on air quality

issues, state regulators on matters of local concern, and so on. Furthermore, Congress can require the primary agency to undertake particular types of public involvement and to respond to public comments, to protect local communities' right to be meaningfully heard.

Current laws that organize environmental reviews by assigning one agency the role of "lead agency," with other agencies serving as "consulting" agencies, are good models. Even more effective would be a regulatory framework giving the single lead agency controlling authority over all collateral permits as well—namely, approvals under the Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, and other statutes that distribute control of mandatory collateral approvals across multiple state and federal agencies.

Alternatively, Congress might determine that state regulators ought to be allowed the "first bite at the apple," with federal regulators stepping in only under certain circumstances. That framework might be workable, but only if Congress sharply identifies the precise circumstances in which federal authority controls.

A cautionary example of that alternative model is the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which assigned to FERC the "backstop" authority to approve or disapprove interstate transmission lines in "national interest corridors" if the state "withheld approval for more than one year" after a project filed its state application. That statute seemed clear enough, until a federal court surprisingly concluded that FERC lacked authority to overturn the state when the state disapproved the project outright within one year. (Specifically, the court concluded that a state that denied a project application within a year had not "withheld approval for more than one year.") An effective regulatory framework for renewable energy projects would need to speak with utmost clarity as to when the state's authority ends and the federal authority begins.

Federal preemption of state law. On a related but separate point, dueling federal and state laws often overlap in the regulation of energy infrastructure safety or environmental protection. That overlap leaves the courts with the ultimate task of deciding whether state law can block a project that federal law authorizes.

Congress often enacts statutes that give federal law preemptive effect, but even clear statutes may give rise to lengthy litigation. The Natural Gas Act's implied preemption of state law required decades of litigation to establish. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 expressly provided

that federal law would trump state law in the approval or disapproval of liquefied natural gas import facilities, but years of litigation still ensued in federal courts to confirm the scope of that preemptive authority. Any federal plan intended to quickly build renewable energy infrastructure must either decide the preemption question clearly and broadly or risk years of delay while the question works its way through the courts.

Balancing energy development and environmental protection. The various environmental statutes regulating energy projects tend to be written in broad terms that, while originally intended to be administered prudently, can be transformed into rigid, imprudent barriers against sound projects. If renewable energy infrastructure development is a federal priority, then Congress should prevent environmental laws from barring projects even when their social benefit far outweighs the minimal social cost.

One possible solution would be to vest the federal decisionmaker with authority to waive the operation of a federal environmental law in extraordinary circumstances. Such provisions are not novel; Congress included a discretionary waiver of obstructive federal laws in the REAL ID Act's mandate for the building of a southern border fence, and it has included similar provisions elsewhere. But any waiver would need to be constructed carefully, to limit its application to extraordinary cases.

Expedited judicial review. After surviving years of federal regulatory review, an approved project faces still more years of judicial review, absent a federal statute requiring expedited review. Jurisdiction to hear appeals involving renewable energy projects should be assigned to the federal courts of appeals—bypassing the lower federal district courts—with instructions to expedite those cases. Furthermore, Congress should consider assigning exclusive jurisdiction over such cases to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit—a well-respected, comparatively expert body of judges that regularly hears many cases involving energy and environmental regulation.

None of this is to say that the nation must promote clean energy alternatives. The costs of that transition would be immense. But if Congress and the president continue to spend substantial sums in support of utility-scale renewable power projects, then regulatory reform is necessary to ensure that those expenditures amount to more than a full-employment fund for lawyers, activists, and bureaucrats. ♦



The desert fall guy—er, tortoise

Death and Politics

On the use and abuse of grief as a partisan weapon

BY NOEMIE EMERY

What's in a political death? Whatever you want or need to see in it. Some deaths—those of Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, William McKinley—mean what they seem to, and are taken accordingly. But others—the assassinations of John and of Robert F. Kennedy and the attempted assassination on January 8, 2011, of Arizona representative Gabrielle Giffords—become points of entry into realms of distortion, in which facts are misread, causes mistaken, conclusions jumped to, guilt wrongly assigned. When did this begin? It started in Dallas, with John Kennedy's murder. Why did it happen? Because people see what they expect that they will see, not things that contradict their assumptions—and other people want to use those assumptions for their own ends. James Piereson, in his remarkable book *Camelot and the Cultural Revolution*, recounts in detail what went on.

Late in 1963, resistance in some parts of the South to the racial integration being pushed by the federal government had become angry and violent: Blood had been shed, people beaten and threatened and murdered. At the same time the John Birch Society, which believed Kennedy and Dwight Eisenhower were guilty of treason, had become confrontational: In Dallas, U.N. ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson was spat on and pushed. So when President Kennedy was shot dead in Dallas only weeks after the Stevenson incident, the initial assumption that he had been killed by a segregationist and/or a right-winger seemed only logical and was therefore widely held. The strange thing was that it remained widely held even after the killer was revealed to be Lee Harvey Oswald, a supporter of Castro's Cuba who had opposed segregation and who hated Kennedy not because he was a liberal who pursued "social justice," but because he was a hawk who opposed the Communist powers and had forced the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba during the missile crisis of October 1962. As Piereson notes, these facts failed to derail the narrative, which simply rolled over and went on without them.

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There were seven major reasons they failed to take hold:

First, the political violence of the time had come from the right and from segregationists; domestic Communists were viewed as apt to be spies, not killers. Second, the Cold War had thawed since the missile crisis had ended, and no one wished to re-chill it. Third, no one wanted to revive the McCarthy era, during which Tail Gunner Joe had wreaked hell on both parties. Fourth, Jacqueline Kennedy, emotionally invested in the civil rights movement, modeled her husband's funeral on Abraham Lincoln's to drive home her belief that the two men had died for much the same causes. Fifth, Kennedy was a Democrat (if a centrist one), and the idea that he had been killed by a left-wing instead of a right-wing fanatic created cognitive dissonance. Sixth, resistance to integration had been both so intense and so violent that when the president was killed in a Southern state at a critical point in the struggle, it was incomprehensible to many Americans who were neither liberals nor Democrats that it could have arisen from any other cause. Finally, the real truth contained contradictions that would have both confused the mourners and defused the emotional moment: The segregationists had done horrible things, but not *this* horrible thing. And Lee Harvey Oswald was neither a racist nor a bigot but a man who supported the civil rights movement: possibly the only one among Kennedy's causes of which he might have approved.

Deprived of the villain the moment required, the culture looked for a blameworthy object, and came up with the "climate of hate": If the killer wasn't urged on by the appropriate motive, he could still be said to be moved by it somehow, as if anger could flow freely from one cause to another, and the fury stirred up against forced integration could drive even a Marxist to kill. Hate was contagious, and if the far right was not guilty, it could still be at fault: People acknowledged Oswald's Communist background while placing the real blame elsewhere. "The cultural and political understanding of the assassination had become detached from the details of the event," as Piereson puts it. Opinion makers "acknowledged in November of 1963 that Kennedy had been shot by a Communist, but said at the same time that he was a victim of bigotry . . . or of the radical right, or (more broadly) of a deep violent streak in the nation. Oswald shot the president but was

not responsible for it. Prominent liberal figures said this openly and repeatedly with the entire nation listening in.”

With Oswald himself an unsatisfactory object of loathing, the search was on for a substitute villain, most often someone the mourners already despised. “The president’s men showed as much bitterness toward Texas as they did toward Lee Harvey Oswald,” writes Jeff Shesol in *Mutual Contempt*, the story of the feud between Lyndon Johnson and Robert F. Kennedy. “More than misplaced grief, it articulated deeply held antagonisms that lingered for years.” Large, coarse, and vulgar (as opposed to the reserved, slender Kennedy), thought (in those days) to be a conservative, a symbol of the state in which the crime happened, and the one man who visibly stood to gain from the murder, President Johnson was soon the object of rage deflected from the actual killer.

Chief mourner Robert F. Kennedy viewed LBJ from the start as an unworthy usurper, and even a guilty one, looking at him as Hamlet looked at Claudius or the sons of Duncan at Macbeth. Consciously or not, he would deliver himself of a remarkable paraphrase of Hamlet’s comparison of his father to Claudius:

“Our president was a gentleman and a human being, . . . this man is not. He’s mean, bitter, vicious—an animal in many ways.” This feeling was not uncommon among the late president’s fans. The first draft of William Manchester’s *Death of a President* opened with a scene that placed Johnson with a shotgun in John Kennedy’s presence, forcing Kennedy, during a visit to his ranch down in Texas, to join him in shooting a deer. “Some critics may write that the unconscious argument is that Johnson killed Kennedy,” as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. told Manchester’s editor, that he was “an expression of the forces of violence and irrationality which ran rampant through his native state.” This theme was expressed undisguised in the drama *MacBird!* by Barbara Garson, in which Johnson (Macbeth) kills John Kennedy (Duncan), and is killed in the end not by MacDuff but by Robert F. Kennedy. The play ran in New York for 386 performances between February 22, 1967, and January 21, 1968. By that time, Johnson was viewed by the left as a war criminal, and he and Senator Robert F. Kennedy were at open political war.



Lyndon B. Johnson takes the oath of office on Air Force One.

By the time Robert Kennedy himself was shot in June 1968, assassination sadly had lost its shock value, but the template for shifting blame had survived. The killing was ascribed once again to a “climate of violence,” which this time was nationwide and much more pervasive than it had been five years earlier, the circumscribed resistance to desegregation having given way to a national rupture over culture and mores and the war being waged in Vietnam.

Once again, the assassin—a Palestinian activist named Sirhan Sirhan—was not in fact moved by the larger political wars but was wholly obsessed with Middle East issues. His complaint against Kennedy was that he had promised

to sell jet bombers to Israel; Sirhan had vowed to kill him before the first anniversary of the Six Day War. In some ways his obsessions mirrored those of Lee Harvey Oswald: His notebooks, Piereson says, were filled with “pro-communist, anti-capitalist, and anti-United States” sentiments, and notes of support for Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, an anti-Western Third World demagogue known in some circles as “the Castro of the Middle East.”

As Piereson writes,

Liberals understood the Kennedys in terms of their domestic liberalism, but Oswald and Sirhan judged them in relation to their foreign policies. . . . There was indeed a climate of lawlessness . . . but Sirhan’s act was quite unrelated to it. Assassins do not always strike according to the logic of popular opinion or the political narratives of pundits and scholars. It might be more justly said that Sirhan was the first of a wave of terrorists from the Middle East to strike out against the United States.

The view of both of the Kennedys was filtered through the myths that attended their murders, making them liberal martyrs to political hatred in this country, instead of two men killed by America’s enemies for trying to safeguard their allies and countrymen. This was not without consequence. “By this route,” Piereson says, “the excessively idealistic version of liberalism that earned the rebuke of all the leading postwar liberals in the 1950s, including Kennedy himself on many occasions, . . . moved into the mainstream of liberal thought.”

In 1964 and 1965, Lyndon Johnson used the grief and guilt from the death of John Kennedy to push through Congress the historic Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, which had faced obstructions during the president's lifetime but after his murder would breeze through with ease. In 2002, when Paul Wellstone, his wife, daughter, and aides died in an accident, Democrats tried to leverage grief into success in the midterm elections. ("Before long, Democrats may view Paul Wellstone's death in a plane crash as the beginning of their resurrection," Jonathan Alter would say.) Even before this, a template had been laid down for how to turn a personal loss to a political gain. "Most of these tragedies did not come about because of the fanaticism of one man," Drew Pearson wrote in the wake of the JFK murder. "They came about because powerful influence molders in the nation had preached disrespect for the government

and the man in the White House who symbolized [it]." But Oswald didn't have disrespect for the government. And in certain hands, "disrespect for the government" could be read to mean "disrespect for the party of government," or for any act of the government the party in power proposed.

And so in April 1995, when a federal office building in Oklahoma City was blown up by domestic terrorists, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds of others, Bill Clinton, who six months before had lost both houses of Congress to Republicans vowing to cut back the government, knew just how to handle it: link talk radio and the Republican House to the catastrophe as part and parcel of an inescapable "climate of hate." Antigovernment talk—coming from Newt Gingrich, Rush Limbaugh, and various others—had reached the ears of unstable people and moved them to violence. "There's nothing patriotic about hating your country, or pretending you can love your country but despise your government," Clinton said, equating "the government" with his own agenda, and his political critics with "dangerous" speech. This was the start of the Clinton recovery, taking him from the irrelevant state he was in after the 1994 campaign to his reelection two years later. "Temporary gain: boost in ratings. . . . Permanent possible gain: sets up Extremist issue vs. Republicans," was how pollster Dick Morris framed the issue in a memo to Clinton.

So successful did this prove for Clinton that in 2010 some Democrats argued that another disaster was just what Obama needed to regain his footing after his midterm "shellacking." "No one wants the country to suffer another catastrophe" like Oklahoma City or 9/11, *Time's* Mark Halperin wrote after the 2010 midterms, while implying that one was just what the president needed. "President Clinton reconnected with Oklahoma [City]," Clinton's pollster Mark Penn said to MSNBC's Chris Matthews. "Obama needs a similar kind of . . . yeah."

And so, the blood had not dried on the pavement in Tucson before the old template kicked in. "They need to deftly pin this on the Tea Partiers, just like the Clinton White House deftly pinned the Oklahoma City bombing on the militia and the anti-government people," a "veteran Democrat" told *Politico*. And they certainly tried. Before anyone knew who the assailant was, Pima County sheriff Clarence Dupnik (a Democrat), who was investigating the shootings, said that his state had become a "Mecca for prejudice," condemning "the vitriol that comes out of certain mouths about tearing down the government—the anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on." It was Dallas all over

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ARE HERE HOME

Obama's War on the States
BY JAMES MANOLAKIS

RNC Enters Wisconsin Public Sector
Union Battle
BY JAMES MANOLAKIS

Scott Walker vs. Public Sector Unions
BY JAMES MANOLAKIS

Morning Jay: In Defense of the "Treason"
BY JAMES MANOLAKIS

Can Mitch Daniels Be Saved from
Himself?
BY JAMES MANOLAKIS

Recent Profiles

Chip Williams

again. “Rep. Gabrielle Giffords’ blood is on Sarah Palin’s hands,” pronounced the *New York Daily News* the day after the shooting, because Palin’s website during the 2010 midterms had “targeted” Gifford’s district as one of several picked out as vulnerable because in 2008 John McCain carried it. Jonathan Alter revisited the Wellstone memorial, suggesting a wounded Representative Giffords could be a potent political force.

Was there a “climate of violence”? There was of a sort—stemming from the hot-button law against illegal immigrants, signed by the Republican governor. Was there an assailant who was unconcerned with these issues? Yes. Jared Loughner, the 22-year-old killer, was to all appearances a paranoid schizophrenic, who lacked even the ideological motives of an Oswald or Sirhan, and was closer in type to John Hinckley, who shot Ronald Reagan, Mark David Chapman, who murdered John Lennon, and Dennis Sweeney, who shot former congressman Allard K. Lowenstein because he believed sinister forces were controlling his thoughts through his teeth. Loughner was moved to shoot Giffords not because of any stand or votes she had taken but because she had failed to answer to his satisfaction an incomprehensible question (not about politics) he had asked her in 2007.

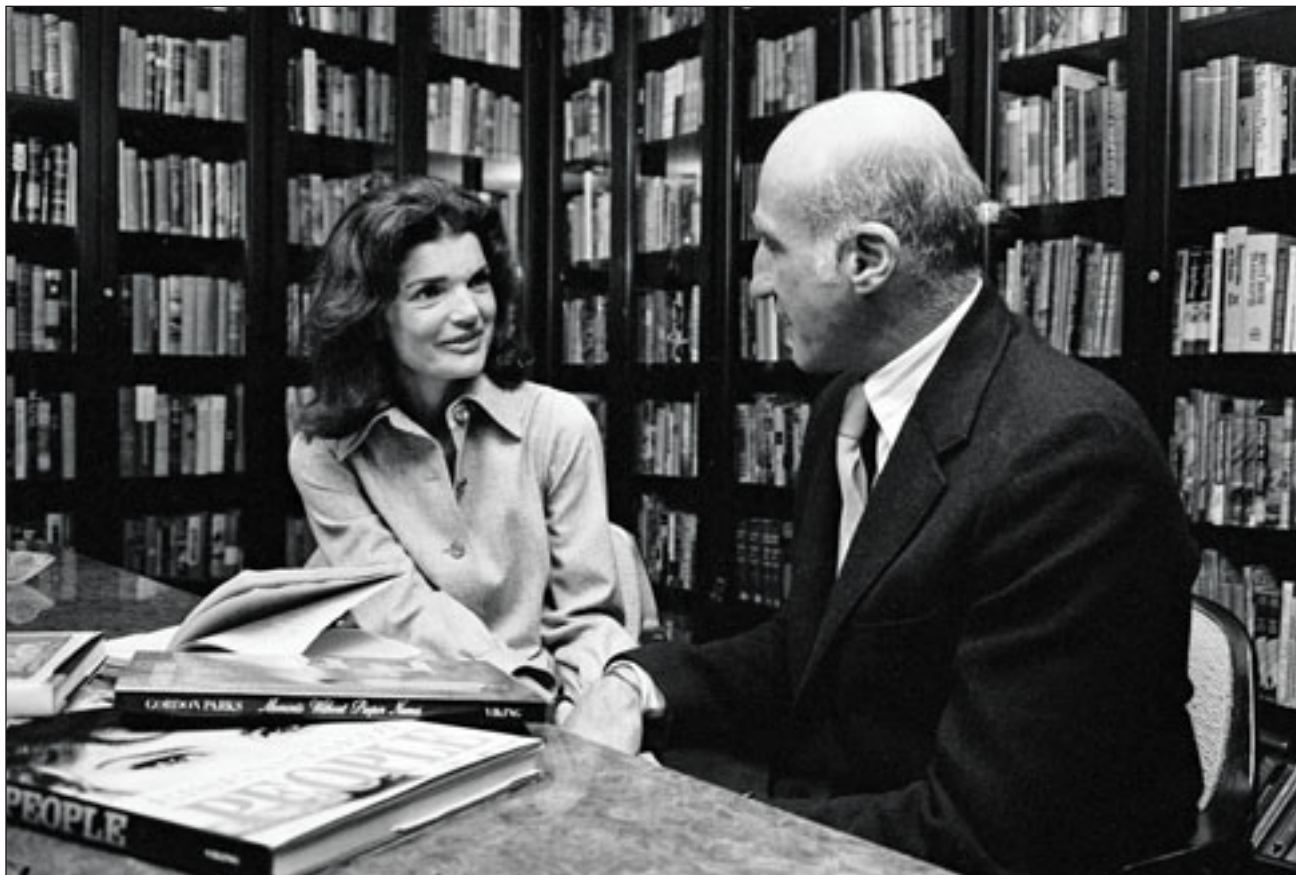
When the criminal failed to fit the preferred story line—to be a conservative, a Tea Partier, or an anti-immigrant activist—was a substitute villain located? You betcha. With the actual criminal being unfit for his purpose, Sarah Palin was drafted instead. Did this defy reason, like the “belief” that Lyndon Johnson killed Kennedy? Yes, but who cared? Two days after the shooting, a rare sensible guest on *Hardball*—Brian Levin, an expert on extremism from California State University—told a disappointed Chris Matthews that Jared Loughner’s act had not been political, and he had not been influenced by Palin, or Limbaugh, or anyone else. “Ideology is the gift-wrapping on the pathology,” Levin said. “He might have been a school shooter . . . he would have gone after a Democrat or a Republican who . . . was not being part of his belief system.” This did not stop Matthews and his other guests from talking for the next three weeks about Palin’s collusion, extending the blame to Rep. Michele Bachmann—who once said she wanted her followers “well armed” [with facts] and “dangerous” in debate.

Did cognitive dissonance, as well as hypocrisy, follow? If in 1963 the *New York Times* ran stories about Oswald’s Communist ties alongside stories that blamed right-wing hate-merchants for Kennedy’s murder, in 2011 the *Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, and other liberal outlets ran stories that conceded that the political right played

no part in the shootings, while saying in the next paragraph that in some ways it did. “MSNBC was crucial in driving the narrative that the killer was egged on by violent political rhetoric, particularly by Palin,” Paul Bond wrote on January 27 in the *Hollywood Reporter*. “Even after it was learned that the shooter was an atheist, flag-burning, Bush-hating, 9/11 Truther who enjoyed joking about abortion . . . MSNBC still did not let up.” JFK torchbearer “Arthur Schlesinger, in his thousand page history of the Kennedy administration, could not bring himself to mention Oswald at all . . . but allocated several paragraphs to a description of Dallas’s hate-filled atmosphere,” as James Piereson tells us. And as Bond has it, “Four days after the shooting, the day Obama cautioned the nation to discuss the issue ‘with a good dose of humility rather than pointing fingers,’ MSNBC over the course of five hours mentioned Palin in connection with the massacre 166 times, while mentioning the alleged killer . . . only 18.”

But this time, however, the old template failed. People did not blame the bloodshed on a “climate of hate.” They did not think the assassin had been “given permission” to kill by talk radio or the Internet. A fairly small audience reads political blogs, and those who do take the frequent online calls to arms or to battle as the metaphorical speech that they are. In 1995, when Bill Clinton blamed Rush Limbaugh and the Tea Party’s forebears for inciting the Oklahoma City bombing, the Internet was in its infancy, and no counterattack had been possible. In 2011, the first attacks on Sarah Palin and her target map of the midterms had barely been leveled before conservative bloggers produced similar “target” maps made by Democrats, recalled incendiary remarks from the left, and reprinted frequent calls to (metaphorical) violence issued by liberal bloggers and TV and radio hosts. They also recalled the vitriolic attacks on George W. Bush when he was president, the blogs, films, and plays that had urged his assassination; the wistful appeals for the return of Lee Harvey Oswald; the hanging in effigy of Sarah Palin in a Hollywood enclave on Halloween 2008.

In 1995, people hadn’t thought to connect the bombings to conservative boilerplate until Clinton raised the subject himself days later. In 2011, liberal bloggers and hosts were out of the gate so fast—and so crudely—that they generated a furious counterreaction, and the White House was forced, ever so gently, to calm them down. Obama won praise for his nice speech at Tucson, but did not get the Clintonesque lift his fans hoped for. Repetition, and crassness, had blunted the impact. The era of making hay out of horror may now be ending at last. ♦



First day of work: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Thomas Guinzberg, 1975

Editor from Camelot

Jackie O among the literati. BY JUDY BACHRACH

About a million years ago, when Jackie Onassis was an editor at Doubleday and I was a lowly reporter at the *Washington Post*, I ran into her at a party for Lillian Hellman. Well, “ran into” might not be the correct term; my editors knew for a fact that Jackie would be at this party, and they dispatched me with the express purpose of (a) getting a quote from Jackie and (b) talking to Hellman without com-

pletely pissing Hellman off—which was very, very difficult because she had the temperament of a Rottweiler, but was necessary because she was a friend of Katharine Graham, the *Post*’s publisher. Getting a quote from Jackie, of course, was the more important goal.

So, on catching sight of the beautiful Most Famous Woman in the Universe, I said: “Ummm, excuse me,

Mrs. Onassis, but I gather Caroline is in England now, living with your friend Hugh Fraser and dating a guy of whom you disapprove. Why is that? What’s wrong with him?” And Jackie

said, in her hushed, miraculously girly voice, which belied both her age and whatever sentiments she harbored: “I’m sorry, but I never talk about Caroline”—and turned her back on me.

From then on, whenever Jackie appeared, or was supposed to appear anywhere, I was dispatched by my newspaper. You cannot believe the stupid parties, the number and length of them, that made up Jackie’s social life and my work life. It was extremely annoying. And futile.

“Send someone else!” I used to plead. “She told me nothing except she wouldn’t discuss her kid.”

“But that was wonderful,” I was told. “You are the first and only person at

Jackie as Editor
The Literary Life
of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
by Greg Lawrence
Thomas Dunne, 336 pp., \$25.99

Judy Bachrach is a contributing editor to *Vanity Fair*.

ALFRED EISENSTADT / TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

the 'Style' section to get a quote out of her, so she's your beat."

I mention this episode only to illustrate how very difficult it is to write anything of substance about Jackie, which I feel fully entitled (despite our brief acquaintance and its caliber) to call her because so does Greg Lawrence in *Jackie as Editor*. He believes that this two-decade editing phase was the most important, fruitful, and gratifying part of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's life. And he should know, because Jackie edited his bestselling book, *Dancing on My Grave*, cowritten with the ballerina and drug addict Gelsey Kirkland, who was once his wife. He found Jackie to be, in that regard, "our own fairy godmother and prodding mother hen"—which are, perhaps, novel Jackie epithets but, alas, fairly representative of his prose style. Also, he's talked to a lot of people who were at Doubleday and at Viking (Jackie's first publishing gig), and a lot of them liked her.

Well, that is an understatement. In fact, everyone Lawrence quotes in *Jackie as Editor* loved Jackie, and some—an unhealthy number, perhaps—worshipped her. Chief among these is Lawrence who, on discovering that in those pre-email days, Jackie penned notes to literary colleagues, writes:

With her shoot-from-the-hip eloquence and love of epistolary, Jackie (who was also an aficionada of the game of charades) would pass impish notes to her colleagues to break up the withering formality she encountered in the conference rooms.

What these "impish notes" consisted of, and how precisely they relate to "the game of charades," must remain a mystery. At least the impish parts: The reader never does discover, through example or illustration, the hilarious side of Jackie. But let's give her this: She was a brave woman to launch, in the fall of 1975, a career in publishing. She was 46 at the time of her decision, and had endured a lot of terrible publicity, first for marrying the Greek billionaire toad Aristotle Onassis—and thus, in some way, betraying the Kennedy/Camelot legacy—and then (or so it seemed to the masses at the time) aban-

doning her second husband while he was dying. Everyone knew she hadn't married Onassis for love, and everyone knew that Onassis's daughter Christina loathed her stepmother—everyone but Lawrence, that is, who disputes this point, or rather quotes people who do—and was trying to winkle Jackie out of a lot of Onassis money which, in the event, Jackie got anyway.

So there she was, pretty, despondent, bored, and loaded, with nothing much to do in her 15-room apartment at 1040 Fifth Avenue—except, as it turns out, take the advice of her friend Letitia Baldrige, who had once served as her White House social secretary, and come around for the dispensation of tea and sober advice.

"Who me—work?" asked Jackie.

It was a fair question. And although Lawrence squeezes startling early accomplishments out of the thinnest air—Jackie just might have listened to John F. Kennedy read aloud certain chapters from *Profiles in Courage*, and maybe offered suggestions because, as Theodore Sorenson testified, "she was a natural-born editor," and Jackie certainly read "Chekhov plays at the age of six," because her mother once said as much—the reader is hard-pressed to believe all this guff. But why quibble? Jackie herself was no stranger to positing extravagant credentials for the job of editor to dubious reporters.

"It's not as if I've never done anything interesting. I've been a reporter myself and I've lived through important parts of American history," she told *Newsweek*. "I'm not the worst choice for this position."

No, she wasn't the worst choice, *Jackie as Editor* argues, even though she hadn't held a paying position since 1953, at which time her "reporting job" consisted, very briefly, of working as an inquiring camera girl for a now-defunct Washington newspaper. But what of it? She knew a lot of important people, and even those she didn't actually know or even much like (i.e., Barbra Streisand) would return her calls, eventually. (Streisand was trying to find a smart lawyer, hoping to sue for libel.) And

that wasn't all. Jackie had dreamed, as she once avowed, "of writing the Great American Novel." She had actually written an essay on perfume for *Vogue*. She liked the poetry of François Villon, the singer Carly Simon, the society pianist Peter Duchin, Candice Bergen, Barbara Walters, the photographer Peter Beard, Leonard Bernstein, urban landmarks, French architecture, French everything. Who could be better suited for the role of Tillie the Toiler?

As Thomas Guinzburg, then the publisher of Viking, recalls for the benefit of the author, on being told by some snotty *Washington Post* reporter (no, not me) that Jackie had absolutely zero experience as an editor so why was she getting the job, he had a ready retort: "No, she doesn't. But I wonder who you had lunch with today or you're going to have dinner with tomorrow."

Such impressive qualifications, he assured the working press (whose members do, in fact, get to dine now and then with pretty substantial figures, and better still, without digging into their own wallets), more than compensated for Jackie's slender résumé. And that's how Jackie managed to pull in \$200 a week, editing part-time. At work, she wore beautiful cashmere sweaters with matching cardigans carefully knotted around her neck, and thin wool slacks that emphasized the smallness of her waist.

Was she good at what she did? On this, Lawrence and all the people he speaks to are of one mind: She was fabulous, and her acquisitions, thanks to her luncheon and dinner companions, miraculous. She brought the style czarina Diana Vreeland to Doubleday for a book of photographs, and valiantly tried to marry it to her own stab at promotional copy, which is worth quoting: "The worlds of royalty, fashion, high society and superstars are here to be dipped into like a gorgeous box of chocolates." Because she was hip and had kids who were hip, too, she pulled in Michael Jackson for a tome called *Moonwalk*—which was supposed to detail his life,

exotic zoo animals, and *pensées*—but lived to regret the experience because Jackson was certifiable and Jackie, I’m afraid, rather clueless. (“Does he like girls?” she wondered aloud to a colleague.)

There were even more Jackie gets: *The New Tiffany Table Settings* (1981), *The Tiffany Wedding* (1988), and my own favorite, *The Tiffany Gourmet Cookbook* (1992), of which Lawrence writes:

What better tribute could there be for a food and fashion book ... which provides table settings and favorite recipes from many in the world of haute couture? Legendary designers Valentino, Yves Saint Laurent and Bill Blass, celebrity chefs such as Wolfgang Puck, socialites such as Betsy Bloomingdale and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney.

Well, you get the idea. About the only serious misstep I could discover in Jackie’s entire career-girl phase was her decision to blame her first boss, Guinzburg, for the acquisition of *Shall We Tell the President*, a novel by Jeffrey Archer that chronicled a fictional assassination attempt on Jackie’s brother-in-law, Senator Edward Kennedy. This was not an inspired idea on Viking’s part, considering the perils in those days of being a Kennedy, and considering that a Kennedy in-law was then the publishing house’s prize jewel. It was Jackie’s contention forever after, especially when the clan’s rage hit the fan (as it was bound to do), that she was ignorant of the book’s contents, and that her boss, in effect, had pulled a fast one, exposing her once again to worldwide derision for seeming callousness. It was this factor that led her to quit Viking in a huff and move to Doubleday two years after starting work.

In fact, she knew a fair amount about the sordid business well in advance of the novel’s release, as Lawrence makes clear. It simply suited her, especially early in her editing career, to remain vague, distant, and apart from the consequences—until, and this unfortunately is a Kennedy trait as well, the consequences came and got her.

I am not among those who dis-

like the Kennedys on principle, and I do believe that Jackie, whatever her drawbacks, gave a rather gray-hued country, as America was in the early sixties, a touch of dazzle. She knew how to dress, and she wasn’t stupid, and there is certainly something to be said for all that. But I can’t help noticing that the author of *Jackie as Editor* points out rather late (page 146) that another, less famous, Doubleday editor, Shaye Areheart, “enjoyed a very special relationship with her.” What was the nature of this special relationship? As it turns out, Shaye

Areheart did “the dirty work” which, presumably, is publisher-speak for “the work.” Shaye became “an integral part of Jackie’s Doubleday team,” also known as “Jackie’s SWAT team,” and in this capacity, was expected to keep the nosy press at bay and negotiate “the fine points of contracts, presenting books in marketing and sales meetings, writing the fact sheets that sales reps used . . .”

In other words, once Jackie was hired, someone else entirely was supposed to stand in as editor. It would have been good to learn this on Page One. ♦

BCA

Exile at Large

The outsider’s insights on the American soul.

BY SUSANNE KLINGENSTEIN

A hundred years ago the philosopher and aesthete George Santayana traveled to Berkeley to recuperate “among her immense forces,” the mountains, forests, and Pacific surf, from the arid flatlands of Harvard’s intellectual conformism.

In an elegant essay delivered at the University of California’s Philosophical Union, he shot some smartly poisoned arrows at his colleagues in the Harvard philosophy department. Published the same year as “The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy,” the essay turned out to be Santayana’s farewell address to America. He sailed to England in 1912. Six months later, temporarily

settled in Paris, Santayana, then 48, wrote a letter to Harvard’s president Abbott Lawrence Lowell in which he expressed his unhappiness with teaching and resigned his professorship. He never returned to America.

Of pure Spanish descent, Santayana had always cultivated the stance of a visiting outsider to the culture. His sensibilities were at home in Europe even as he became one of the great stylists in the English language. Santayana’s caustic wit, his noncoercive yet keen philosophical observations, and the musical elegance of his prose have kept most of his works in print. Nevertheless, this recent

reissue in one volume of “The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy” and *Character and Opinion in the United States*, Santayana’s post-World War I lecture series delivered in England and published in 1920, is a welcome addition.

‘The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy’ AND Character and Opinion in the United States

by George Santayana
edited by James Seaton
Yale, 240 pp., \$16

The Highpriest of Pessimism

Zur Rezeption Schopenhauers in den USA
by Christa Buschendorf
Universitätsverlag Winter,
336 pp., 42 euros

Susanne Klingenstein is a lecturer in the Harvard/MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology.

The book was edited and is furnished with an excellent introduction by James Seaton, and enriched by four illuminating essays by Wilfred McClay, John Lachs, Roger Kimball, and the editor. Seaton highlights Santayana's exposure of those intellectual follies in academe that *mutatis mutandis* have continued unabated. "Santayana's critique . . . of the pretensions of idealist philosophy to an authority beyond and superior to that of the natural sciences reads today like a critique of postmodernist claims to a similar superiority available to textualists," writes Seaton. Santayana's critique of William James, Seaton argues, was taking issue with a multiculturalism *avant la lettre*.

For James it was a matter of course that one must tolerate the right of others to believe whatever they want to believe. Santayana countered that, in respecting only the faiths of others without paying any mind to the truths these faiths might point to, James condemned himself to vapidness. "All faiths," wrote Santayana about James's view,

were what they were experienced as being, in their capacity of faiths; these faiths, not their objects, were the facts we must respect. We cannot pass, except under the illusion of the moment, to anything firmer or on a deeper level. There was accordingly no sense of security, no joy, in James' apology for personal religion. He did not really believe; he merely believed in the right of believing that you might be right if you believed.

Santayana always felt ambivalent about James, who had died in 1910 and left the Harvard philosophy department severely depleted. He enjoyed that James's "romantic cosmology" had given "a rude shock to the genteel tradition." But the noncommittal nature of James's works irritated him. More aggravating still, James "disclaims all antecedent or superior knowledge, listens to the testimony of each witness in turn, and only by accident allows us to

feel that he is swayed by the eloquence and vehemence of some of them rather than of others."

So much good-natured impartiality grated on Santayana who, as a Nietzschean aristocrat, did not suffer fools gladly. But Brahmin Boston had always irritated Santayana. He had been raised in the bourgeois severity of Madrid and the austerity of Avila. In 1872, when he was eight years old,

Royce thought this unsound and made Santayana write about Rudolf Hermann Lotze, who, in combining science and Hegel, tried to argue that the universe can be explained as a functioning of the *Weltgeist*. Deep down, Santayana probably never forgave Royce.

Santayana stayed at Harvard to become a socially aloof but academically productive and profoundly cherished teacher of philosophy. His students included T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Walter Lippmann. By 1911 Santayana's patience both with Harvard's noncommittal goodness and with the "thistles of trivial and narrow scholarship" was exhausted. When the death of his mother in 1912 provided him with a small legacy, he gladly resigned from his Harvard post.

He outlined his view of America in his farewell address at Berkeley. America, he said, was a country with "two mentalities, one a survival of the beliefs and standards of the fathers, the other an expression of the instincts, practice, and discoveries of the younger generations." The backwater mentality was at home in the "neat reproduction of the colonial mansion" while the dynamism of invention

and industry produced the skyscraper.

American philosophy naturally dwelled in the fake colonial mansion. It was grafted onto Calvinism, which is "an expression of the agonized conscience." But as America evolved into material success, "the sense of sin totally evaporated" and "good-will became the great American virtue." Santayana then traced the rise of Transcendentalism, whose origins he located in the "colossal" egotism of the Germans. He credited Kant with having brought it "into vogue."

Kant came . . . to remove knowledge in order to make room for faith,



George Santayana, 1944

he joined his Spanish mother in Boston. She had settled in her first husband's city to bring up their three children as Americans. Jorge was her only child by her second husband, Agustín Santayana. The family lived on Beacon Street, was bilingual, and the boy Santayana grew up with close ties to the Brahmin class.

After graduating from Harvard in 1886, Santayana spent two years in Berlin. He returned to Harvard's philosophy department planning to write his thesis on Arthur Schopenhauer, whose bleak view of the subjugation of the intellect to the will had become all the rage in *fin-de-siècle* Europe. But Josiah

which in his case meant faith in Calvinism. In other words, he applied the transcendental method to matters of fact, reducing them thereby to human ideas, in order to give to the Calvinistic postulates of conscience a metaphysical validity.

The transcendental method, though, was “sympathetic to the American mind,” and Emerson became its premier prophet. “Emerson was a shrewd Yankee, by instinct on the winning side; he was a cheery, child-like soul, imperious to the evidence of evil as of everything that did not suit his transcendental individuality to appreciate or notice.” From Emerson it was a quick jaunt to William James, who

kept his mind and heart wide open to all that might seem, to polite minds, odd, personal, or visionary in religion and philosophy. He gave a sincerely respectful hearing to sentimentalists, mystics, spiritualists, wizards, cranks, quacks, and impostors—for it is hard to draw the line, and James was not willing to draw it prematurely.

That Santayana’s assessment of the American intellect as insufferably cheerful was somewhat hasty, if not altogether unfair, is unfolded in a superb recent study by Christa Buschendorf, a professor of American studies at Goethe University in Frankfurt. In her book she traces Schopenhauer’s impact on American intellectual life from Herman Melville to Henry Adams, via James, Royce, Santayana, and George Cabot Lodge. Her study, written in a clear and graceful German that matches the lucidity and elegance of her arguments, begins with an incisive, close reading of Melville’s story “Benito Cereno” as a Schopenhauerian allegory pitting Intellect against Will. It ends with an ingenious interpretation of Henry Adams’s *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams* as a diptych: the first work being a contemplation of the world as Will, and the second work a contemplation of the world as Idea (*Vorstellung*).

No ingenuity in the world, however, can transform James and Royce into fatigued turn-of-the-century pessimists. But Buschendorf shows persuasively how close readings of Schopenhauer’s

works shaped the thinking of both philosophers. She delineates them as thinkers of greater depth, substance, and interest than Santayana was willing to concede. Buschendorf also examines Santayana’s own work for traces of Schopenhauer (of which there are a great many) and adds a wonderful chapter on Santayana’s best-selling novel *The Last Puritan* (1935). The protagonist of this novel about the “sentimental education of a young American of the best type” resembled, in many ways, Santayana

himself. Naturally, Santayana compared his novel to Adams’s *Education*: “My hero dies young, being too good for this world. He is an infinitely clearer-headed and nobler person than Henry Adams, but equally ineffectual.”

Santayana was always inclined to think rather well of himself. But after reading the two works James Seaton has picked out for reissue, we may agree that, like his hero, Santayana was clearer-headed than Adams, and still has a great deal to teach us. ♦

B&A

Under Siege

How Israelis contend with an existential threat.

BY LEE HARRIS

In 1985, the French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann released a nine-hour documentary that recounted the individual stories of European Jews who fell victim to the Nazis. For his title, Lanzmann did not use the term that has become most commonly associated with the Nazi exterminations—the Holocaust—but instead, chose a single poignant word: *Shoah*, Hebrew for “calamity.”

In 2003, the Italian journalist Giulio Meotti traveled to Israel to document the latest calamity to befall the Jewish people. *A New Shoah* is the product of nearly six years of painstaking, often painful, research. A non-Jew deeply committed to the fate of Israel, Meotti interviewed hundreds of the many Israelis whose lives have been shattered by Islamic terrorists, talking to colleagues, relatives, and friends of those murdered by death squads and suicide bombers. His aim is to rescue

the memory of those Israelis who have fallen victim to terror, to give them names and faces, and to listen to the stories that their loved ones tell about them, to discover what they had loved,

and to recall what they had lived for. Meotti’s unflinching narrative is often as emotionally devastating as Lanzmann’s documentary, but it also harbors stories of human strength and heroic

moral purpose, of hope overcoming despair, of the will to celebrate life even when assaulted by enemies who chant monotonously of death.

Israel, Meotti writes, has become “the first country ever to experience suicide terrorism on a mass scale . . . a black hole that in fifteen years swallowed up 1,557 people and left 17,000 injured.” In some cases victims were men and women who had survived the horrors of Auschwitz only to lose their lives to a Palestinian suicide bomber. Many victims were native-born Israelis who had never known another homeland. Some were like Eliyahu Asheri, the 18-year-old son of an Australian convert, who was kidnapped while

A New Shoah
The Untold Story of Israel's Victims of Terrorism
by Giulio Meotti
Encounter, 428 pp., \$27.95

Lee Harris is the author, most recently, of *The Next American Civil War: The Populist Revolt Against the Liberal Elite*.



Aftermath of a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, 2006

walking home one day and died with a bullet through his head.

Jewish children have always been a favorite target for Islamic terrorism, ever since the first attacks on Israeli society. As representatives of the various terrorist organizations in the Middle East have said, Jewish children are the adults of tomorrow. . . . So far, 128 Jewish children have been killed, 9 of them less than a year old.

Meotti writes with a sense of mission. Why, he asks, has no one told the stories of these people? Few of the accounts of terrorism published since 9/11 have dealt with the one nation that had the longest continual experience of terrorism. For Meotti, this silence is particularly alarming given the fact that “throughout [Israel’s] history, a quick scrub has always been made of the blood of the Jews killed simply because they were Jews.” Meotti is similarly disturbed by the recrudescence of Jew hatred in contemporary Europe: “Anti-Semitism—and not

only in the guise of anti-Zionism—is in vogue again at European universities, in labor unions, in newspapers, among the political and cultural elite. Shouts of ‘Death to Jews’ have filled the streets, and crocodile tears spilled for Jews killed during the Holocaust make it much easier to demonize the living ones in Israel.”

The scale of the Nazi genocide was staggering. Millions were murdered with modern efficiency, using assembly-line methods, carried out by faceless bureaucrats. But the impersonality of the death machinery was key to its genocidal effectiveness. In contrast, the terror attacks on Israelis rely on homemade bombs and Qassam rockets rigged in kitchens. The killers are often teenagers. But what these terrorists lack in organizational skills is more than made up for by their zeal. The Nazi apparatus was as bleak and joyless as it was inhuman: The morale of those who operated the extermination camps was low, and the suicide rate

alarmingly high. Killing Jews was a dirty business, and no one became a popular hero for doing it. In contrast, successful terrorist attacks on Israelis are met with communal celebrations; those who kill Jews, especially in large numbers, are hailed as heroes and martyrs.

Meotti refers to Israel as a “metaphysical nation.” By this, he means that it is made up of people from a diversity of backgrounds, fused together in a common homeland. But it is also metaphysical in the higher sense of the word. At the heart of the Jewish tradition is a metaphysics of radical hope: The world is a good place, and by our efforts we can make it better. Meotti demonstrates that this life-affirming spirit remains alive in modern Israel, and *A New Shoah* is more than the story of victims of terrorism. It is a tribute to the power of determination and hope, and its final chapter is taken from a memorial plaque dedicated to teenaged victims of a massacre: “Choose life—we will not stop dancing.” ♦

A Very Cold War

The dying gasps of the Rosenberg apologists.

BY HARVEY KLEHR & JOHN EARL HAYNES

The theme of Walter and Miriam Schneir's *Final Verdict* is not, as its subtitle claims, "what really happened in the Rosenberg case." The real theme, as Walter himself writes, is "No apologies. No regrets." For a historian or journalist whose first priority is accuracy, this is a strange remark. Walter Schneir and his wife Miriam (who contributed a preface and afterword to this short volume) spent most of their lives promoting the theme that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were total innocents who never participated in Soviet espionage, that David Greenglass was also never a spy, that Harry Gold had lied about his role as a courier picking up espionage information from Greenglass from the Los Alamos atomic bomb laboratory, and that the United States government knowingly railroaded an innocent couple into the electric chair.

The Schneirs allow that they have reached the "anguished" conclusion that they were wrong about these points that constitute the heart of their historical argument. Now any historian or journalist *should* have regrets about get-

ting the essential facts wrong: Doesn't it suggest that your judgment was in error and you need to give thought to what misled you, and why? That the Schneirs have no regrets is connected

to their other declaration of "No apologies." Not only did Walter and Miriam Schneir insist on the Rosenbergs' complete innocence, they denounced historians who thought the evidence pointed toward guilt in vicious, angry tones as incompetents, fools, and willing stooges for an evil American government. Any historian or journalist with a minimum of civility would be abashed or contrite for harshly disparaging those who turned out to be right about the essential points of the case. The Schneirs, however, are polemicists for the pro-Communist left, and *Final Verdict* is a politically tendentious pamphlet, just as their

prior efforts were propaganda disguised as scholarship. While they allow that they got the facts wrong, they clearly believe they got the politics right, so no regrets and no apologies.

Final Verdict is devoted to distorting, twisting, and spinning evidence to create a version of history that comports with the pro-Soviet left's view of the essential evil of the United States and the heroism of anyone who served the Soviet cause. They try to move the goalposts by waving aside their former claims that the Rosenbergs were

not involved with Soviet espionage and insisting, instead, that the most important issue is whether the government prosecutors dotted every "i" and crossed every "t" in terms of legal procedures. This is pettifoggery. In the American criminal justice system, flaws, errors, exaggerations, corner-cutting, and sometimes tricks and bad faith, are, alas, too common; but the system counts on its adversarial nature to create a balance as prosecution and defense point out errors and rebut the other side. The heart of the *historical* issue was, and remains: Was Julius Rosenberg a Soviet spy? Did he recruit David Greenglass to commit espionage while the latter worked at the Los Alamos atomic facility? Was Harry Gold a KGB courier who picked up Greenglass's espionage product and conveyed it to the KGB? The documentary evidence that is available today from multiple sources is that the answer to all three questions is an emphatic *Yes*.

Both Schneirs seek to spin their concession that Julius engaged in espionage by insisting that, while he passed military technology to the Soviet Union, he was not an *atomic* spy. This is absurd. Greenglass, obviously, stole atomic information; indeed, the Schneirs, in their version of the other-dude-did-it defense, insist that Greenglass seriously understated his role as an atomic spy and *he* should get the blame, not Julius. (Keep in mind that, for decades, the Schneirs insisted that David Greenglass never spied for the Soviet Union.) As we noted in *Spies* (2009), new documents from KGB archives show that David Greenglass understated his espionage. This is hardly a shock, inasmuch as most people who confess tend to admit only to what they believe authorities already know and avoid saying more than they have to. But that Greenglass was more important a spy than he had confessed to being hardly lets Julius off the hook. Julius recruited him, and the more important an atomic spy Greenglass was, the greater was Julius's contribution to Soviet atomic espionage.

Further, documents from KGB archives demonstrated that Greenglass was not the only atomic spy Julius recruited. (Aside from Julius, we do

Final Verdict

What Really Happened in the Rosenberg Case
by Walter & Miriam Schneir
Melville House, 208 pp., \$23.95

Exoneration

The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Martin Sobell—Prosecutorial deceptions, suborned perjuries, anti-Semitism, and precedent for today's unconstitutional trials
by Emily Arnow Alman & David Alman
Green Elms Press, 516 pp., \$24.95

Phantom Spies, Phantom Justice

Elizabeth T. Bentley, Harry Gold, Roy M. Cohn, Irving H. Saypol, Judge Irving R. Kaufman, J. Edgar Hoover, and the Rehearsal for the Rosenberg Trial or How I Survived McCarthyism
by Miriam Moskowitz
Bunim & Bannigan, 312 pp., \$20

Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes are coauthors, with Alexander Vassiliev, of *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* (Yale University Press).

not know of any other Soviet operative who can claim credit for recruiting *two* atomic spies.) In early 1944 he enlisted a fellow Communist engineer, Russell McNutt, who worked at Kellex, the construction firm building the massive atomic facilities at Oak Ridge. Julius's recruitment of McNutt is inconvenient for the Schneirs, so they wave it away as unimportant. Miriam Schneir insists that the KGB's high hopes for McNutt were "never realized." This is typical of the distortions with which *Final Verdict* is replete: McNutt worked at the Kellex design office in New York City; after the design work was done, he declined to leave his family in New York and move to the then-primitive living facilities at Oak Ridge, so at that point his usefulness to the KGB ended and he was dropped as a source. But the implication that the KGB's disappointment that he did not become a long-term atomic spy was a statement about his never having provided valuable information, and never having been a useful source, is totally false.

From his position in the Kellex design office, McNutt supplied Moscow with detailed plans for the construction of the massive uranium separation facilities at Oak Ridge. Uranium separation was an essential step in building a working atomic bomb, but it presented enormous engineering difficulties. The American atomic project, at vast cost and after much experimentation, solved those difficulties. McNutt passed on to the Russians the engineering designs that actually worked, relieving the later Soviet atomic program of having to solve the problem independently. McNutt delivered his first set of plans to the KGB in February 1944, and Moscow was so pleased that, in April, it informed the New York KGB station:

A bonus in the amount of \$100 has been allotted out of the 2nd quarter estimate for "Antenna's" [Rosenberg's] initiative in acquiring an agent [McNutt] to cultivate "Enormous" [the atomic bomb project].

The KGB recognized Julius's contri-

bution to atomic espionage with a cash bonus in 1944. The Schneirs' denial of his contribution to Soviet atomic espionage serves their polemical goals, but it is historically false. Equally false is their spin that Ethel Rosenberg was an innocent housewife in the kitchen who did not know what her husband was doing and did not assist him. This fiction is the Schneirs' attempt to save part of their old narrative. Julius was a spy, they admit, so no matter what shortcomings one finds in the prosecu-



Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, 1950

tion, he was guilty of espionage. However, Ethel, they continue to insist, was totally innocent, the United States government knew she was innocent, but convicted and executed her anyway. Again, the evidence does not support this myth.

Julius Rosenberg was a major spy, recruiting and managing the largest network of military technology spies the KGB ever possessed. Ethel was not a spy in her own right; she simply assisted Julius. But her assistance was active, not passive. When, for example, Julius learned that the Army had sent David Greenglass to Los Alamos, he immediately wanted to recruit him. But David was isolated at the secret facility and Julius could not go

there to meet with him. The only path to David was through David's wife Ruth, who was allowed to visit him at a nearby city. So to get at David, Ruth first had to be recruited—and Ethel was key to Ruth's recruitment. A September 1944 report from KGB officers in New York to Moscow reported Julius's proposal to recruit Ruth and contained this justification: "Liberal [Julius Rosenberg] and his wife recommend her [Ruth] as an intelligent and clever girl." Clearly KGB officers working with Julius knew Ethel and considered her recommendation about recruiting Ruth worth passing along to Moscow. A November report from the KGB office in New York further told Moscow that Ethel "is characterized positively and as a devoted person," had been a Communist party member since 1938, was "well developed politically," and "knows about her husband's work" as well as that of the leading members of his espionage network.

In a report he himself wrote, Julius presented the recruitment as a joint effort by himself and Ethel. He had taken the lead; but Ethel's participation assured Ruth that recruiting David Greenglass, her husband and Ethel's brother, was the right thing to do. Without Ethel's assistance, Ruth might not have agreed to draw her husband into spying for the Soviet Union. And if Ruth had not recruited David, there would have been no atomic espionage by David and no Rosenberg trial. A major spy she wasn't, but Ethel was an active participant in espionage.

The Schneirs' earlier position was that the Rosenbergs did not confess because they were innocent, there was nothing to confess, and they accepted execution and the orphaning of their children rather than confess to a lie. That reasoning, obviously, will no longer work. The new position is "of course they lied and lied"—but their lies were justifiable because confessing would have meant identifying other members of Rosenberg's extensive espionage network. And in the worldview of *Final*

Verdict, identifying people who spied for Stalin against the United States was a very bad thing. In particular, “Julius was privy to the dark secret that the American Communist Party under Earl Browder had involved itself in enlisting dozens of members for espionage.” To the Schneirs and the pro-Communist left, to have admitted this blockbuster at the time would have confirmed the suspicions of anti-Communists and further discredited the Communist party. So the Rosenbergs did right to accept execution rather than tell the truth about the key role American Communists played in Soviet espionage.

Like the Schneirs, Emily and David Alman were associated with the Rosenberg defense since the early 1950s. Fellow residents of the Knickerbocker Village cooperative apartments, they became interested in the case and founded the National Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case, which agitated for a commutation of the death sentence and later campaigned to have the historical verdict reversed. Emily Alman died in 2004 and her husband finished *Exoneration*, an exhausting hodgepodge of confusion and misinformation.

While the Almans now accept that the Rosenbergs were guilty of espionage, they insist that they were unfairly convicted of an “oral indictment” of treason, and the guilty verdicts were based on this unjust charge. Despite the rhetorical excesses of the prosecution and the judge—in his sentencing, he accused the Rosenbergs of being responsible for the deaths of 50,000 Americans in Korea—the evidence that was produced against the defendants in court was sufficient to convict them of conspiracy to commit espionage, and the material that has emerged from Russian archives and memoirs in the past 20 years has confirmed most of it.

Most notably, the key prosecution witnesses, Harry Gold and the Greenglasses, were not serial liars, as the various Rosenberg defenders have long maintained. Allen Hornblum’s excellent new biography, *The Invisible Harry Gold*, demonstrates that he told the truth. The Almans are reduced to

suggesting that Gold lied about being the Soviet courier who met with Klaus Fuchs because he wanted “historic immortality”—oblivious to all of the evidence that he did exactly what he testified to. They question whether Gold ever met with the Greenglasses in Albuquerque in 1945, despite evidence so conclusive that even the Schneirs (who also once claimed the meeting never happened) have given up on that notion. *Exoneration* is filled with historical absurdities and pitiful efforts to suggest that the prosecution was part of an anti-Semitic plot orchestrated by J. Edgar Hoover.

Of course, the Schneirs and the Almans have not made the only recent efforts to rehabilitate spies. Miriam Moskowitz was convicted in 1950, along with her boss and lover Abe Brothman, of conspiracy to obstruct justice in an espionage investigation, largely on Gold’s testimony. No one ever accused Moskowitz of espionage, although her association with Brothman, who was a Soviet source, has tainted her ever since. In *Phantom Spies*, *Phantom Justice* she washes away any sympathy for her as collateral damage in a spy case by a series of mendacious statements and distortions and by demonstration of a mindset that displays the Stalinist mentality in full flower.

Moskowitz lacks a reliable grasp of history, crediting the New Deal with building the interstate highway system (Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed it in the 1950s) and using domestic spending to buy the country out of the Great Depression. (Industrial mobilization for World War II ended the Depression.) The Marshall Plan, she claims, inaugurated the Cold War by propping up capitalism, lest American workers look to the Soviet Union for a model! Unsurprisingly, she had joined the American Communist party in 1950.

Her troubles began with Brothman, a chemical engineer who had covertly supplied the Soviet Union with industrial information for years via Harry Gold. She and Brothman were lovers, even though “he was devoted to his

family.” Gold broke a cardinal rule of espionage tradecraft, going to work for Brothman after serving as his courier. And although Moskowitz insists that the only information Brothman supplied to Gold was his own intellectual property and was not secret, the KGB was livid at Gold, correctly surmising that Brothman’s relationship with Elizabeth Bentley, a Soviet spy who had defected, would lead the FBI to him and then to Gold. When the two men were called before a grand jury in 1947, they concocted a story and lied; when Gold was arrested in 1950 and confessed, Brothman and Moskowitz (who had backed up Brothman’s lies) were convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice, for which she served two years in prison.

Phantom Spies reads as if it were written in the 1970s, the high tide of revisionism when, in the intellectual world, it became fashionable to hold that everything done in the anti-Communist era after World War II had been mistaken, fraudulent, hysterical, and destructive. None of the evidence that has emerged in the last 30 years appears to have intruded into Miriam Moskowitz’s world. She writes that the Rosenbergs and those named by Bentley were victims of hysteria, that Gold and Bentley were liars, that none of the accused spies held important positions anyway, and that Harry Gold did it all for the money—actually, Gold’s confession got him a 30-year prison term—and because she had rejected his sexual advances.

Neither the Schneirs nor the Almans seem perturbed that Morton Sobell, one of the few surviving spies, has finally confessed and admitted that he lied to everyone who had foolishly defended him for half a century. But lying for the higher cause of communism and the Soviet Union has never troubled the Rosenbergs’ loyalists.

Is there anything of value to be gained from these three volumes? In terms of insight on the Rosenberg case, none. In terms of a look at the fantasy world of the remnants of the pro-Communist left—well, yes. If any reader has a taste for that sort of voyeurism, they are quite illuminating. ♦



Unit Cohesion

How one Roman legion held together against the common enemy. BY JOHN PODHORETZ

In the most quotable movie of all time—*Airplane!*, of course—you surely recall that great moment when the glad-handing pilot turns to the 10-year-old boy who's come to visit the cockpit and says, "Joey, do you like movies about gladiators?"

Joey would be around 40 today. He didn't answer the pilot's question, but I think if he had said yes, he might have grown up to be one of the 30 people at Manhattan's Lincoln Square multiplex the other night when I went to see *The Eagle*. There was only one woman in the theater, which may not be surprising, given that the movie is being sold as a military action picture. But there were no teenage boys, the usual audience for action-adventure fare featuring fights with swords and shields and bows and arrows. Everyone else, including me, was a middle-aged male. And let me just say that everyone else, but me, all seemed to love gladiator movies.

The Eagle has an intriguing premise devised by a children's adventure writer named Rosemary Sutcliff, who wrote the novel on which the movie is based. Director Kevin Macdonald and screenwriter Jeremy Brock explore it with enough skill and intelligence to make it very much worth seeing even if you are indifferent to gladiators.

It begins 20 years after the famously terrifying disappearance of an entire legion of 5,000 Roman soldiers in Northern England along with the legion's military standard, a golden eagle. Marcus Aquila, the son of the man who had commanded

the vanished Ninth Legion, comes to Britain to assume his first command. The tired and cynical soldiers who man his fort think Aquila is just

The Eagle
Directed by Kevin Macdonald



Channing Tatum, Donald Sutherland

a lightweight boy, but in an opening battle sequence that is both thrilling and confusing, he discerns a threat from locals the veterans do not, saves the fort with his quick thinking, and then devises a brilliant strategy to save some hostages from the blood-thirsty Druids.

Based on a 1954 novel *The Eagle* may be, but in these first scenes, we can already see its true inspirations. There's a dollop of *Dances with Wolves*, a dash of *Black Hawk Down*, a sprinkling of *Patton*, and more than the daily recommended serving of, yes, *Gladiator*. Later, it ladles *Apocalypse* over itself, with a garnish of 300. And through it all, there exudes the testosterone of those old movies with Steve Reeves as Hercules in the shirtless form of the ex-model Channing Tatum, who is as buff and hairless as a Roman statue. Tatum is actually very good in it, but it's not clear

to me that his acting chops really matter as much as his torso.

Grievously injured, the noble Aquila ends up in the Londinium residence of his uncle, played by Donald Sutherland. From the way he looks at Channing Tatum, Donald's avuncular interest is rather like that of Chris Rock's Uncle Johnny. ("Everybody's got that one molester uncle. Your mama's like, 'Where them kids at?' 'They're with Johnny.' 'Get them kids! Hurry up, get them kids! Don't leave them with your Uncle Johnny!'")

It is at this point that the movie's utter and complete lack of women (except as the very occasional silent extra) begins to take on fascinating dimensions. Donald doesn't have a wife, or a mistress, or

a daughter, or anything. Channing Tatum didn't leave a wife, or a girlfriend, or anything, at home. Angry Britons allude to the abuse of their women by the Romans, but you would be hard-pressed to know there were any women in Britain. And in the movie's last third, when a bunch of painted pagan warriors get together, they do a dance that in a traditional gladiator movie would have been performed by a bevy of curvy female ecdysiasts.

The Eagle is a movie about ancient martial life, so it's both innovative and refreshing that the action is not interrupted by unnecessary heterosexualization. But it probably didn't have to go all *Brokeback Mountain* on us either. After a time *The Eagle* comes to turn on the relationship between Aquila and the British slave he rescues from a gladiator's blade. The slave's name is Esca, and he pledges his life to Aquila even though he says he "hates the Romans and everything you stand for."

Their relationship is extremely physical. During an operation to save Aquila's leg, Esca throws himself on top of Aquila's body to hold him down. They ride together, they camp together, they even have a fight during which they roll around on each other. Later, after a complex chain of events, Aquila whispers to Esca, "I thought I'd lost you."

That's a little on the nose, guys. We got the point already.

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.

MATT NETTHEIM / FOCUS FEATURES

FEBRUARY 22, 2011

ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

Hosni Mubarak Accepts Permanent Exile at Luxor

Former President 'Disappointed' with Vegas Casino Conditions

By DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

LAS VEGAS—After a weekend of intense negotiations with State Department officials, former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak agreed to a permanent exile at Luxor. Only after he boarded a private jet, however, did he realize he was headed not to the Nile Valley but rather the Luxor hotel and casino in Las Vegas.

"There has been a gross misunderstanding," insists Mubarak, who has spent the last three hours playing a progressive slot machine. "I never meant to come here to this sham of a casino." Besides, he says, "don't you think if I wanted to stay on the Strip it would be someplace more upscale, like the Wynn? I might as well be at Circus Circus. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to track down a cocktail waitress regarding my complimentary drink."

State Department spokesperson P.J. Crowley says officials were quite clear about Mubarak's options. "There was nothing misleading—we simply provided a list of destinations, such as Rome and Paris." On second thought, he adds, "maybe it would have been helpful to list their states as well," by which he meant Rome in Georgia and Paris in Texas. On the other hand, says Crowley, "Mr. Mubarak could have done worse. He could have selected Versailles, Indiana."

While his advisers ponder their



GETTY IMAGES

"This exile has taught me one thing," says Mubarak. "Always bet the maximum."

options, Mubarak himself is trying to make the most of it, hitting the slots, playing a few hands of Baccarat, and seeing several shows. "I checked out this Criss Angel the other day—that is very dangerous black magic!" says the former president, who also saw Carrot Top twice. "I never laughed so hard."

On the downside, Mubarak complains about the geriatric crowd, which

reminded him of the City of the Dead. "Everywhere I look, I see mummies." He was also unhappy with the buffet: "I was made to peel my own shrimp. And the prime rib was very tough." Nevada senator Harry Reid offered advice on the latter, saying, "I think you should cut and cut clean."

Continued on Page A14

Germans Acquire New York Stock Exchange

'Ze Market vill open at 9:30 pünktlich!'